

48 Hours 941

Chapter 941: Biker Gang And Human Shield

The two skateboarders soon arrived in front of Old Man Geng and Zhang Heng.

And their target was Old Man Geng. One of them raised his gun and pointed it at Old Man Geng.

“Don’t move. Come with us,” he warned.

A chill ran up from Old Man Geng’s feet to his spine, and he raised his hands unconsciously. Before he could speak, he heard a gunshot.

For a moment, Old Man Geng thought someone had shot him. But the next moment, he saw the skater boy who pointed the gun at him falling to the ground with surprise written across his face.

And Zhang Heng didn’t just stop there, killing the other skater boy with the pistol he had just assembled with Lego.

Stunned in paralyzing shock, Old Man Geng stammered, “Were... were they sent by Mr. G?”

“Did you hide anything from him? Or, have you lied to him before?” Zhang Heng asked.

“No. We’ve all said what we wanted to say. I told him the truth, and I did not lie.”

“They don’t look like they were sent by him. He could have just sent someone to ask you to go back to him, and he knew that you would not disobey.”

“Yeah.”

Old Man Geng nodded repeatedly. “Wait, where did your gun come from?” he reacted after a while.

“It’s a secret. No comment,” replied Zhang Heng, bending over and picking up the gun on the ground.

Old Man Geng saw the two pools of blood, and his heart rate began to rise again. He saw Zhang Heng still standing there after checking his gun.

“This is not the time to do that. Let’s run... quickly,” he could not help but urge.

Zhang Heng, however, only shook his head. “You can’t run away. Do you really think that those motorbikes in front and behind us are just bystanders?”

Listening to what Zhang Heng said, Old Man Geng suddenly realized that a group of biker gangs had surrounded them.

With at least more than thirty riders, the biker gang turned up in a mighty legion. Each bike had two riders, where the front one commandeered the bike, and the pillion carried all sorts of weapons.

The gang had seen the two corpses on the side of the road, which was why they did not charge at them in the first place.

However, the situation was still extremely unfavorable for the duo.

Although Zhang Heng had a gun in hand, he still needed to fight them alone. The nearest building that could be used as cover, on the other hand, was ten meters away. Evidently, they were here to kill Zhang Heng, with two of them already aiming their guns at him. One held a gun with an automatic tracking function, a weapon that could lock onto the target with a thermal imaging map, adjust bullet trajectory, and kill its target with one hit.

Just before the biker could pull the trigger, Zhang Heng suddenly rushed to Old Man Geng's side, instantly lifting the latter and placing the old man in front of him. By doing that, the thermal images of the two had now completely overlapped.

Having done a considerable amount of prior research, Zhang Heng understood the weapons and equipment of this era to a good degree. It was the only way he could prevent himself from getting killed by unknown attacks in the next possible battle. He was using Old Man Geng as a human shield but wasn't about to sell him out.

Judging from what the skateboarders said, they weren't going to kill Old Man Geng. Instead, they wanted to ask him some questions. For them to do that, they would need him alive. This was very important information to Zhang Heng since it meant he needn't worry about Old Man Geng's life during the battle. By keeping Old Man Geng close to him, Zhang Heng was basically invincible.

Old Man Geng soon realized that he had become Zhang Heng's shield. After ensuring his safety, Zhang Heng first killed the gunman behind him. Later, he dealt with the mohawk with a laser crossbow beside him. Lastly, he turned around to send the third bullet into the man's chest with the automatic-tracking gun.

Seeing his companion getting shot, the remaining bikers charged at Zhang Heng instead of running away. Nevertheless, afraid that they'd accidentally kill Old Man Geng, Zhang Heng's strategy was still effective. So this time, they chose to use a melee weapon to attack Zhang Heng. A sharp Taito was about to strike at his waist.

Coupled with the speed the bike was traveling at, the Taito slashed at a rate that exceeded human limits.

But even so, Zhang Heng still managed to avoid it.

Confident in his body's movements, the assassin training he received in Rome greatly improved his agility. It had also strengthened his ability to detect threats, enabling him to react a lot quicker in advance.

The problem was that he had to face more than just the two enemies on the motorcycle. Zhang Heng had just dodged the Taito when another fist slammed into his face. The puncher wore a glove with sharp spikes that gleamed in the night. If the enemy managed to land his fist, Zhang Heng's head would surely be filled with holes that spurted a lot of blood.

Zhang Heng moved right before the man could hit his face, killing the rider in front of the man who was about to punch him. Quickly, the motorcycle lost control and swooshed past Zhang Heng's side, the dead rider and the pillion sent flying in the sky a second later. The out-of-control motorcycle continued its rampage, ramming another motorcycle that was approaching Zhang Heng, causing a serious traffic accident.

Zhang Heng then took advantage of this critical time to kill two more riders. Old Man Geng, who was beside him, was completely dumbfounded. Initially, he was angry at Zhang Heng for using him as a meat shield, especially when he saw the enemies pointing their guns. His heart almost stopped beating.

He thought that he and Zhang Heng would die here. But later, he saw Zhang Heng killing off the enemies, even eliminating six bogeys in one go.

And that wasn't the end. It was only the beginning.

Since they were worried that they might kill Old Man Geng accidentally, the bikers had to keep away their guns. After that, they became wary about Zhang Heng killing their riders again. So, they unknowingly slowed down their motorcycles, making them easy targets.

After losing four more allies, the leader finally signaled his gang. Instead of retreating, he ordered his men to spread out and look for cover. They had learned their lesson this time, and they stopped aiming at Zhang Heng's head. This time, they went for his legs. All they had to do was to ensure Old Man Geng was alive. Nobody mentioned anything about him being unscathed. If they aimed at Zhang Heng's legs, there would be no worries about accidentally killing Old Man Geng.

Thus, Zhang Heng brought Old Man Geng to a closed grocery store twenty meters away. He broke the glass with a shot before the two sought refuge behind the counter.

Chapter 942: Memory Encoder

"How could this happen?" Old Man Geng laid down behind the counter, panic written across his face.

Although he wasn't the target of the bikers, he was so frightened that his legs became soft since he stood right beside them, the spikes and blades coming way too close for comfort when the fight was going on. Then, in the midst of it all, some blood splattered across his face. Old Man Geng could not imagine how Zhang Heng could withstand wave after wave of attack.

The thugs too couldn't believe that Zhang Heng managed to gain the upper hand with so many fighting against him. And he even killed quite a number of them as well. Unfortunately, it did not make their situation better for the duo. For now, the attack had temporarily stopped, but at the same time, the roar of motorcycle engines became louder and louder. It meant that more and more were enemies coming at them.

"What deal did you help him with?" Zhang Heng frowned.

He had emptied the pistol's clips that he picked up from the ground earlier. After throwing that gun aside, he had only the gun made of Lego bricks. It still had many bullets in it, but they were obviously not enough to deal with so many enemies.

The hamster given by F was now running around frantically in its cage, looking very anxious. Old Man Geng still hesitated after hearing what Zhang Heng told him. He seemed to be really reluctant to mention anything related to the meeting just now.

Hence, Zhang Heng did not force him, saying instead, "I don't want to get myself into this big trouble. And I'm not the least interested in your transactions. But if you want to return to the third level alive,

you'd better tell me everything. Let me know, at least—if they can't capture you in the end... will they kill you? Of course, you can also choose to say nothing and risk your life."

Upon hearing that, Old Man Geng's expression changed. He finally chose to save himself instead of keeping secrets. "I don't know where those people came from," he blurted in a jiffy. "The trade between the two parties revolved around a memory encoder."

"A memory encoder? Is it similar to a device that can create a new memory in a person's mind?"

"It's more than that. The memory encoder can delete and rewrite memories. If the human brain is a computer, then the memory encoder is equivalent to programming software. It is usually used with human cloning technology, where it can provide a constant flow of cheap labor for various companies.

"To make it sound simpler, they first produce the clones they need through gene cloning. These clones are like a commodity. Once the hardware gets completed, the memory encoder will begin to program the clones, assisting in setting their personalities, skills, experiences, and so on. In short, the clones produced in the end are almost indistinguishable from ordinary people, and they require way fewer resources to train. This is because they could grow them in a petri dish until they are 18 or 20 years old. All they need to do in the end is to write a set of memories of their lives into their brains before they turn 20, and they can start working immediately without any form of training."

There was a hint of suspicion in Old Man Geng's eyes when he talked about cloning technology.

"The first batch of clones have been experimentally put to use as early as twenty years ago. About six years ago, a lot of companies began to use clones. Of course, it didn't go well at the beginning, valiantly opposed by the labor union. But now it's a major industry, and everyone knows it."

"I... just came." Zhang Heng said.

"..."

"In short, the technology related to human cloning has always been the Federation's top-secret technology. The memory encoder is no exception. There is only one memory encoder in the entire New Shanghai 2097," Old man Geng said.

"And the ones who own it plan to sell it?" Zhang Heng raised his eyebrows.

"Of course not. No one can touch the memory encoder. It is placed on the 27th floor of Shengtang Morgan's headquarters. It is extremely well guarded, with almost flawless security over there. And the memory encoder is equipped with a self-destruction program triggered in the case of an emergency. Hence, no one will think of stealing it. The one that they traded is an experimental prototype memory encoder from the earth. It is a very old model, and it has some flaws. It is, however, still usable. The prototype was supposed to be destroyed, but the seller managed to figure out a way to get his hands on it," Old Man Geng said.

"And you acted as the middleman of this transaction? I know that the business at the House of Old Things is not very good, but don't you think that the role you played put you in too much danger?"

"Of course, I know. I am not blind! I saw the mob outside the building just now." Old Man Geng sounded a little annoyed.

“Otherwise, why would I hire a bodyguard?”

“Seriously, you should’ve hired an armored division rather than a bodyguard,” Zhang Heng replied.

“Now that I have a better understanding of the situation, the good news is that they too should be curious about the identity of the seller when they attempt to capture you. They won’t kill you unless it’s their last resort. The bad news is that you just committed a crime, and we can’t ask the police for help.”

“Well, what should we do then?”

“Let’s wait.”

“Wait? There are a lot of enemies outside the shop!” Old Man Geng almost stomped his feet. They had hidden in there for a short while, and many new motorcycles were now parked outside the shop. It was hard to imagine how many more enemies would come later.

“It’s useless for us to make a breakthrough now. There are only two of us. And you are not invincible. They realize now that they are allowed to hurt as long as they are still alive. In other words, they will not hesitate to shoot at us if we go out now. The best thing we can do right now is to wait for our allies to save us.”

“Who are our allies?”

“Whoever wants to buy that memory encoder through you is our ally. After all, this is Mr. G’s territory. I bet he should’ve been informed that we are being ambushed at this moment. Let’s just hold on for a little longer. The calvary will be here soon. And I bet our enemies know about it too. If I’m right, they will launch a second wave of attacks soon,” Zhang Heng said as he handed the hamster cage to Old Man Geng.

“Help me take care of my new roommate.”

“Huh?” Old Man Geng held the hamster cage with a dull expression.

The next moment, the bikers launched another round of attacks at them. They were still worried about killing Old Man Geng by mistake. So they put away their guns and switched to melee weapons. This was the exact outcome that Zhang Heng had been hoping for.

While the first enemy stepped on the counter of the grocery store and hurriedly jumped down, Zhang Heng quickly pulled the trigger sending him to his maker. He then caught the knife that fell from the enemy’s hand.

“Oh. They really shouldn’t give me the weapon I want most.”

Chapter 943: God Of Murder

With a blade in his hand, Zhang Heng’s killing mode was officially activated. He felt that he had returned to the night of the bloody battle at Bakumatusu Kyoto. An endless wave of enemies poured in from all directions like a raging tsunami.

In terms of swordsmanship, this group of bikers could never be compared with the samurais he fought last time. Once they started to make a move, Zhang Heng could see that their movements were full of vulnerabilities. There was also no teamwork among them, where they solely relied on numbers alone.

However, they held other advantages as well, especially the weapons they owned. Although they couldn't use their guns, they had all kinds of melee weapons. Some of them were also equipped with mechanical prostheses.

In the beginning, Zhang Heng suffered a small loss. Although he saw someone charging at him with raised fists, he chose to ignore it for now. He had to first handle the enemy holding a stun baton on the other side. Right after Zhang Heng slashed him with his blade, he quickly turned around to deal with the enemy that wanted to punch him. However, the enemy didn't seem affected when the blade landed on his fist. All that could be seen were the sparks flying from the contact.

Zhang Heng also almost dropped the blade due to the powerful recoil. Although he failed to hurt his opponent with his blade, it did change the trajectory of the fist. In the end, the enemy's fist went past Zhang Heng and landed on the grocery store's wall.

The wall cracked due to the force delivered by the fist, dust flying into the air and raining down onto them. Fury flashed across the man's eyes, and he attempted to punch Zhang Heng, getting up immediately to attack the second time. The moment he lifted his fist, however, Zhang Heng was well prepared to strike him first. This time, he wouldn't be giving him any opportunities to attack. Before his fist could come in contact with Zhang Heng, Zhang Heng had already sliced off his head without any hesitation.

The head then rolled towards Old Man Geng's side, leaving the latter and the hamster in his hands completely terrified. Before his fear could even subside, Old Man Geng felt his collar getting pulled up by someone, and he was about to be dragged away from the counter. Fortunately, Zhang Heng, on the other side, had been paying attention to the Old Man Geng. While he was fighting with the two new opponents that charged at him, he had quickly drawn his gun and killed the man who tried to take advantage of the chaotic situation.

As the latter's body slammed on the counter. Old Man Geng quickly ran back behind it. On the other hand, Zhang Heng drew an arc with his blade in the air, bypassed the enemy that made a defensive posture in front of him and stabbed his chest with his blade.

The bikers stopped attacking after they saw what Zhang Heng did to their allies. None of them expected Zhang Heng to have such good marksmanship and also fearsome swordsmanship. In the blink of an eye, three of the bikers were sent to meet their maker.

At the same time, the bikers knew that there was not much time left for them. So, they just took in a deep breath, bit the bullet, and continued to charge at Zhang Heng.

Judging by how they were behaving, it seemed they were planning to sacrifice themselves to capture Old Man Geng.

As a result, the pressure bearing down on Zhang Heng's shoulders amplified instantaneously. So far, he had no problem fighting against them. The biggest problem he had was that he needed to take care of Old Man Geng on the other side. After he emptied the Lego gun's clip, he could no longer save him from a distance. As a result, he had put away the Lego gun, grab another blade, and switch to double-blade mode. In the end, he barely managed to protect Old Man Geng.

Even for him, it was not easy to maintain such an intense close-range melee fight, especially when the enemy in front of him did not care about casualties. Fortunately, Mr. G's men were here just in time. Only less than eight minutes had passed since the battle started. The ruler of the first level had organized and assembled nearly a hundred subordinates to help them. It exceeded the expectations of the bikers, and they were covered in despair.

The first to rush to the battlefield was Miss F. As Mr. G's fiancée. She did not act like a queen who knew nothing about combat but rather like a military general. When she drew the saber with her mechanical arm and jumped at the enemies, she looked like a ferocious tiger descending from a mountain.

Her attack speed was faster than Zhang Heng's. She fought so well thanks to her mechanical arm and the special alloy sword, not to mention Zhang Heng's Shrouded Sheath was not with him right now. Still, it was undeniable that her performance was amazing.

And Miss F's present had completely destroyed the bikers' morale. Initially, they were relying on the time difference. Otherwise, they wouldn't have waited until Old Man Geng met Mr. G before they made their move. At that time, Old Man Geng had already handed over the information in the briefcase and closed the deal between the two parties. Usually, the level of their vigilance was the lowest at a time like this.

Everyone was caught off guard by their sudden attack. Unfortunately, they did not expect that Zhang Heng was there to protect Old Man Geng. As a result, they failed to kidnap Old Man Geng. And the cavalry was here to rescue them. If they wanted to survive, they had to flee now.

Miss F put away her alloy sword, and she did not even bother to look at enemies that fled from her. She walked towards Zhang Heng and Old Man Geng and asked, "Are you okay? It's our fault for letting such a thing happen on our territory. We were negligent, and I apologize on behalf of Mr. G."

Zhang Heng threw the blade aside, shook his head, and said, "It's okay. Anyway, neither of us got harmed."

Old Man Geng did not think that he was doing fine. He was surrounded by dead bodies, and there was blood on his face. Fortunately, the blood did not belong to him. Though he was not physically injured, it did not mean that he was not mentally scarred. Later, the expression on his face became more and more in sync with the hamster in his arms.

His brain could still process the information around him logically. He now knew that the two people in front of him were the Gods of Killing. When the two talked, he kept quiet for the first time. At the same time, he prayed that the god would forget the impolite words he had said.

Miss F nodded. "The attackers come from a medium-sized gang that has recently gotten out of our control. Most of the members are runaways, and there is something wrong with their brains. Clearly, they cannot be the mastermind. Someone bribed them and promised them that he would help them move to a higher floor. Otherwise, they wouldn't have dared to fight us in the open. Rest assured, I guarantee that none of them will escape."

After that, she paused for a while. And she looked at the corpses around her. A look of surprise flashed across her eyes. However, she did not ask any questions about it. Instead, she said, "I'll get two sets of new clothes for two of you. You can choose to stay here or return to the level you came from."

Chapter 944: True Me

Old Man Geng hesitated and decided to return to the third level, his main reason being better public security. At least they wouldn't be encountering street fights on the third level. Of course, the more important thing was that he had to give the seller feedback after he discussed the transaction with Mr. G.

And Zhang Heng had to return to Xu Qian's apartment as well. So, Miss F sent four men with a clear background to escort Old Man Geng back to the third level.

At the House of Old Things, Old Man Geng paid Zhang Heng fifteen shellac records in one lump sum. This was the reward for his protection. Coupled with the records that served as the deposit, Zhang Heng received six extra shellac records. These were a token of gratitude from Old Man Geng for protecting him from the violent mobs.

"These are all the shellac records I've collected. That's all I have." Old man Geng handed over the records to Zhang Heng. His tone was more polite than before. After all, he did witness Zhang Heng singlehandedly killing the mob. "I will give you those building blocks as well. You don't have to pay rent anymore."

Zhang Heng did not reject all those gifts. After he took those records, he heard a system notification reminding him that he had earned another 150 points.

"Do you have any other ways to collect more shellac records?" Zhang Heng asked afterward, "I can find a way to raise money to buy them, or, as in this case, provide my services as a form of payment."

"Why are you so enthusiastic about shellac records?" Old Man Geng eyeballed at Zhang Heng curiously. "There are now extremely few left in this city. It's not that easy to collect all of them. Usually, they are collected by rich individuals from the fourth and fifth levels. I do want to help you. If this transaction goes smoothly, I guess I will leave New Shanghai 0297."

"Why do you want to leave this place?" Zhang Heng raised his eyebrows.

Old Man Geng, however, seemed hesitant to tell Zhang Heng the reason.

"Forget it. I have no interest in exploring your personal affairs. Just tell me who I should be looking for to collect more shellac records after you leave."

Old Man Geng thought for a while before replying, "This is my trade secret. If I decide to leave here, I will send you his name and contact information the day before I depart."

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Zhang Heng returned to the Yacheng community at about 11 at night. Xu Qian wasn't done with her livestream yet.

Zhang Heng placed the golden hamster that Miss F gave him on the table. After that, he took a bath, cleaned up the bloodstains on the skin, and walked out of the bathroom with his newly bought bathrobe. He then got himself a glass of water, sat on the sofa, turned on the projector, and entered Xu Qian's livestream room like what he'd done for the past few days. At the same time, he clicked into the fan chatroom.

In her streaming studio, Xu Qian had just finished dancing, and her cheeks were flushed. Now, she was chatting with her fans about a game that had just been released. As far as Zhang Heng knew, Xu Qian had no interest in playing games. However, after looking at most viewers' backgrounds, he realized that they were mostly made out of avid gamers. So about half a month ago, Xu Qian started to talk about the trendy games to prevent her fans from declining. And for this reason, she had deliberately learned a bunch of gaming jargon from the internet.

Her strategy was proven to be very effective after a while. When a cute girl like her began using gaming jargon while chatting, she'd become irresistably attractive to the gamer. As a result, for the first time ever, Xu Qian managed to stop the decline of her fans. In fact, her livestream viewers had even started increasing slightly.

After realizing how effective the method was, Xu Qian officially decided to adopt this strategy. Every night, she would chat about games on her stream. However, after a while, more began to realize that she was merely a fraud and deliberately learned all that gaming jargon. Hence, her viewers started to criticize her, and the number of her viewers began declining again.

But compared to the rate of her previous viewer drop, the decline had indeed slowed down by a little. Thus, Xu Qian ignored all those haters in her livestream room.

She also talked about this when she was chatting with Zhang Heng last night. In her own words, people were contradictory creatures. The audience who came to her livestream room always mentioned that they wanted to see the true her. But that was actually not true.

Xu Qian gave an example, saying that she did not understand how things worked in this line when she first signed the contract. She was just a rookie back then, and whenever she went live, she would just make use of the natural lighting and put on her usual makeup. She even wore a dirty sweater and wrapped herself tightly in it. Usually, her topics revolved around a female.

Since she was a rookie, she was always full of confidence. At that time, she studied all those famous streamers and thought that they were hypocrites. At first glance, she saw that they were not acting like themselves. She felt that they were not as sincere as her.

She also believed that the fans would prefer to watch a streamer willing to show her true side. As a result, reality hit her hard. The number of people that watched her livestream was pathetic. And some of the streamers who started at the same time as her had already recruited throngs of fans by relying on the innocent personality they had crafted for themselves. Some even gave themselves a coquettish personality.

So Xu Qian decided to put away her naive thoughts and used her first month's salary to buy a set of expensive cosmetics, gifting them to a veteran streamer on the verge of retirement. The veteran streamer saw that she had bought a meal and costly cosmetics. Hence, in return, she related her experiences and routines accumulated over the years working as a streamer to Xu Qian. Since she was about to retire, she had no intention of taking those trade secrets to her grave. And Xu Qian did benefit a lot from her.

Xu Qian then relied on these experiences and routines that she learned and gradually established her own personality, dressing style, and chatting skills. Finally, she was slowly climbing towards the peak of her career.

“All the people you see on the Internet are not real,” Xu Qian said. “Do you really think that I like wearing cattails and pose in front of the camera in all kinds of stupid postures? And why would I want to force myself to talk about those games that I don’t care about?”

“Sometimes, I feel that there is no difference between me and a product on the store shelf. We are created by market demand and data. The packages are beautifully packaged and come in different types of packaging to cater to different needs. Sometimes, when you lay your eyes on a product, you somehow think it is very special. Still, it is just a product designed in a way to attract customers with special needs. And once a specific product becomes popular, countless products will follow suit, appearing in the market like mushrooms after the rain.

“I still remember the first sentence the veteran streamer said to me that night. No one cares what kind of person you are. When people enter your livestream room, they already have a purpose in them, even if they don’t realize it sometimes. Either they are lonely, feel the need to satisfy their primitive impulse, or want to fantasize about a pure and innocent person. Find those desires, give them what they want, and then you can get what you want.”

Chapter 945: Let Me Ask Another Question

While Zhang Heng watched the livestream, the golden hamster on the table finally regained its stamina after a long rest, and it started to run on the wheel. It looked like it wanted to go out for a stroll. Unfortunately, no matter how fast it ran, it could never leave the cage.

After a while, it got tired from running. So, it laid down in the cage again and began to play dead.

Zhang Heng looked at it, and a sudden thought crossed his mind. The studio’s door opened at a quarter past twelve, and Xu Qian walked out. Seeing that Zhang Heng was still watching the livestream, she could not help but ask, “Do you have any updates about the stalker?”

“Well, I have a couple of suspects right now.”

“That fast?” Xu Qian was bewildered. Although she asked Zhang Heng about the investigation’s progress, she wasn’t expecting any results. She only wanted to remind Zhang Heng. He was, after all, paying a great deal of attention to her stream and managing her fans. This caused her to be a little flattered. Still, Xu Qian was paying the security company to ensure her safety.

“Yeah,” Zhang Heng nodded. “I took a look at the mall’s surveillance footage. The stalker is good at hacking. He hacked the mall’s cameras and escaped before we could catch him. However, it looks like he hasn’t done anything like this before. And could also be his first time risking arrest. He must be extremely nervous right now since he isn’t sure if he made a mistake.”

“So?”

“So, he will try to find out how much information we have about him.”

“Do you think he will watch my livestream later or join my fan group? No wonder you made me stay silent about me being stalked on the livestream. Are you trying to draw the stalker out? And you have been on my livestream and fan group for a rather extensive amount of time recently. You are trying to look for the suspect, right?”

Xu Qian realized that she had probably misunderstood Zhang Heng’s actions before this. She treated him as one of her ordinary viewers who watched her livestream every day. In order to make up for her mistake, she took the initiative to offer some help. “Is there anything I can help you with?”

“Of course.” Zhang Heng circled a few IDs in the fan chat room.

“Do you recognize these people?”

Xu Qian squinted when she looked at the names. Three of them had joined the group after the day she was being followed in the mall. Two of the members she completely did not recognize, but as for the other member, Xu Qian remembered that he sent her a lot of gifts before. However, she still knew nothing about his background.

But when she saw the last name, she was taken aback.

“Him? Does he have any problems?”

The ID with the handle “E-Goat” circled by Zhang Heng last was the creator of this fan chat room.

Xu Qian was quite familiar with E-Goat because he was with her the longest among all the other fans. He had been watching her livestream since the first day she started streaming. She had only a handful of fans at that time; hence she could remember all their names.

However, E-Goat usually spoke little in the chat room. Hence, Xu Qian thought that he should be a very timid person. He would often watch her stream in silence and send her gifts from time to time. E-Goat once ranked as the top viewer that sent her the most gifts. But as Xu Qian became more and more popular, he fell from the top spot since there were more wealthy individuals who joined her fan group.

Despite that, he had no complaints at all. He still offered to help Xu Qian with some background work, including establishing a fan chat room and helping her with her publicity. E-Goat had done so much for her, which was why she had a good impression of him. She could not figure out why Zhang Heng would include him in his list.

“I heard a fan majoring in computer science mention that E-Goat’s is a computer network expert. There was this once, he helped your fan solve a question his teacher failed to in one night,” Zhang Heng said.

“But you can’t be treating everyone with excellent computer networking skills as stalkers, right?” Xu Qian reasoned. “And I know E-Goat. He seems to be a network engineer of a company, and he is a very good person.”

“You are right. But you can’t explain why he didn’t come to the chat room in the past two days.”

“Hold on. You are confusing me. I remember that you told me that the stalker would come to my chat room very often. And now the reason why you suspect E-Goat was because he didn’t come to my chat room for the past two days?”

“There are two possibilities. If a newcomer joins the chat room, he would most likely stay all day long. But for E-Goat, the first to join the chat room when it was first established, guilt might cause him to stop talking in the chat room. Instead, he would appear offline and pay attention to everyone’s messages,” Zhang Heng explained patiently.

But Xu Qian still found it unacceptable.

“Well, let’s go and ask him tomorrow,” Zhang Heng suggested.

“Hmm?”

“The computer science major in the chat room said that he knows E-Goat’s address. After E-Goat helped him solve the problem, he invited him for dinner, and he also ordered two bottles of beer. However, he did not expect E-Goat to have an extremely low tolerance to alcohol. He got drunk after drinking half a bottle of beer. After that, he kept calling your name. Left with no other option, the computer science major had to send him home. And that’s how he acquired his address.”

“I don’t think it’s a good idea” Xu Qian still seemed a little hesitant. E-Goat had been with her for a long time, after all. He witnessed her rise and fall. It was why Xu Qian no longer treated him as an ordinary fan. Instead, she considered him as a good friend who she had never met before. Now, they were about to meet for the first time for all the wrong reasons. Zhang Heng suspected that E-Goat was the one that had been stalking Xu Qian.

Zhang Heng seemed to know what she was thinking. So, he added, “We can choose not to talk about the stalking matter. Anyway, you are going to quit the streaming line soon. Why don’t you take this opportunity and say goodbye to him.”

Xu Qian was finally moved by Zhang Heng. After that, Zhang Heng asked the fan to make an appointment with E-Goat. However, he did not mention that Xu Qian would tag along with him.

After finishing the work at hand, Zhang Heng looked at Xu Qian again. He was thinking of the right way to phrase the question he was about to ask: How much do you know about human cloning?

“What?” Xu Qian did not expect Zhang Heng to suddenly ask such a question.

Zhang Heng’s expression still remained very calm. “Let me rephrase my question. Am I a clone?”

Chapter 946: I Am A Human Clone

Translator: EndlessFantasy Translation **Editor:** EndlessFantasy Translation

The proxy war dungeon’s difficulty had been one of the hottest topics in discussion among the players. Although the agents on top of the leaderboard didn’t share their experience in the proxy war dungeon, the players who scored too low and failed to enter the next round of the game were more than willing to share theirs.

According to their descriptions, the proxy war dungeon’s content could be bizarre at times. The one thing that the players agreed on, however, was that it was a lot more difficult than an ordinary dungeon. The Alien quest Zhang Heng completed was one of the most challenging quests he had encountered. As for his current quest, Zhang Heng had not encountered any complications until tonight.

The person he was supposed to protect, Xu Qian, was just an ordinary girl. She lived at the third level of the city with good security, and although she had encountered some minor problems before, they did not seem a major issue.

As of now, Zhang Heng had acquired a good deal of information about the man who stalked Xu Qian. His investigation was steadily progressing. If this went on, he could complete this two-week bodyguard mission easily. It also meant that he'd still have half of the game time left upon completing this task. He never expected that this quest with the title, Bodyguard, would have nothing to do with this bodyguard mission.

Until tonight, he still did not know where the threats could come from.

It wasn't until Old Man Geng told him about the memory encoder and human cloning that Zhang Heng vaguely noticed something wasn't right. Previously, he had searched up information relating to New Shanghai 0297 but found nothing about human cloning. According to Old Man Geng, the residents of New Shanghai 0297 were supposed to be aware of the existence of human clones.

Being a player put Zhang Heng at a disadvantage. It made sense that he was completely oblivious that he was a clone. However, when he thought about Miss F's attitude towards him when they first met and the hamster who could never get out of the cage, Zhang Heng finally realized his identity in this quest.

Although Xu Qian did not answer him, Zhang Heng had gotten the answer he wanted from her facial expressions.

"Interesting. Did someone mess with my mobile network? When I search the internet, I can't seem to find any information related to human cloning."

Xu Qian was horrified. She then took two steps back.

"I, I don't know."

"Someone told me that the memories clones have were generated by the memory encoder. That means all the contacts in my address book and the emails in the mailbox are fake. This also explains why my relatives are not here in this city. Uhm... they were supposed to communicate with me once a month. In other words, my memory would very likely be reset at least once a month. No wonder you wore so casually when we first met. As far as I know you, you occasionally dress skimpily during your livestream, but you are actually quite conservative in private, especially considering that you are about to get engaged."

Zhang Heng finally found the loophole in this quest.

If he failed to realize his identity as a clone during the two weeks of protecting Xu Qian, then the next thing that awaited him was probably a memory reset. He might even forget that he had been playing for fourteen days. As for the worst-case scenario, others might discover that he was an outsider when they rewrote his memory.

"We shouldn't talk about this kind of thing." Xu Qian had backed up to the wall. She looked a little overwhelmed, with both hands behind her back.

“Why? Is it because some laws and regulations prohibit you from talking about human cloning in front of a clone?” Zhang Heng paused, then continued, “Are you trying to contact a security company? Report my anomaly? I strongly advise against it.”

Xu Qian’s intention was exposed by Zhang Heng. And she could not help but panic even more. Considering the difference in strength between the two and the time needed by the personnel from the security company to come here, she finally stopped what she was doing. Waving both of her hands in front of her, she asked in fear, “What do you want?”

“Nothing. I just want to have a chat with you.” Zhang Heng stretched out his hand and signaled her to sit down.

Xu Qian hesitated for a moment when she saw it and finally sat down on the sofa aside. She used to sit here and chat with Zhang Heng about her problems. Back then, the circumstance was different. She knew that Zhang Heng’s memory would be rewritten later. So, she did not have to worry about anything. In other words, she could say anything to him without holding back. But now, the situation had become very complicated for her.

Xu Qian subconsciously tightened her neckline.

“Don’t worry. I’m not going to hurt you.” Zhang Heng said.

“We have been staying together for so many days. I know what kind of person you are, and I am deeply sympathetic to your discovery,” Xu Qian said. “But you should know... You can’t escape them. I think you should take the initiative to make a confession at your company.”

“Really? How did they deal with the clones who discovered their identity? Rewrite their memories? Or destroy them outright?” Zhang Heng asked rhetorically.

“I’m sorry. I can’t tell you anything. Once they capture you and check your memory, they will find out that we had this conversation,” Xu Qian replied.

“You are right. There are indeed laws and regulations that prohibit me from telling you anything related to human cloning.”

Upon hearing that, Zhang Heng did not make any comment. Instead, he continued to ask, “What is the difference between clones and ordinary people?”

Xu Qian wanted to stop talking about it, but for some reason, she felt that Zhang Heng’s temperament seemed to have changed. Earlier, his presence seemed oblivious to her, and now she could feel the pressure from him.

So after going silent for about half a minute, Xu Qian said, “As far as I know, the body of a cloned human is no different from an ordinary human. The only difference is that there is a special fluorescent mark on the back of the clone’s neck. That is your serial code, and it can be seen under ultraviolet light. In addition, there is a tracking device in your body.”

Xu Qian’s words also explained why Miss F’s attitude towards him changed in the screening room. If Zhang Heng was right about it, the light above him was an ultraviolet light when he stepped into the building through the door. It was also at that time that Miss F discovered he was a clone.

Zhang Heng was more concerned about another issue now.

“Tracking device? Where is it?”

“Your... Underneath the cerebral cortex.”

This was bad news for Zhang Heng. It meant he couldn't remove the tracking device by himself. And the hospital in New Shanghai 0297 would not provide such a surgery on a clone.

Chapter 947: I'm Afraid You Might Need To Get A New Boyfriend

Zhang Heng was not too worried about the fluorescent marking on him. All he needed to do was to use a scarf or his shirt's collar to cover it. Usually, no one would notice it. In contrast, the tracking device in his body was more troublesome to deal with.

As long the tracker was in his body, he would eventually be captured by others no matter where he hid. By then, he would need to face a steady stream of enemies. However, Zhang Heng did not panic. This was the fourth day working as a bodyguard to protect Xu Qian. As long as she did not report his abnormality to the security company, he still had about ten days to solve this problem.

So the first thing he needed to do right now was to reach a consensus with Xu Qian.

“If you don't report my abnormality to my company, what kind of punishment will you get?” Zhang Heng asked.

“I don't know... I just want to get on with my life peacefully, accept my boyfriend's proposal, and move to the fourth level. I don't want to get involved in any trouble, please,” Xu Qian begged.

“Well, sometimes a relationship has to go through some twists and turns to be complete,” Zhang Heng reminded. “You'd better answer this question truthfully because we are now thinking of ways to lessen your troubles.”

“It's useless. Once you are caught, they will look at your memories, and then they will know about the conversation that has taken place tonight,” Xu Qian said. “No matter how perfect you plan the whole thing, the end result will always be the same.”

“If that's the case, I'd better try my best not to capture by them.” Zhang Heng said, “Has there been a similar situation like this where a clone went of control?”

“There have been several cases like this, but they managed to keep the situation under control within 24 hours.” Xu Qian hesitated and explained, “In the early days, it was said that they did not hide the identity from the human clones. Instead, they instilled in them the belief that they should serve humans unconditionally. Other than that, they also programmed them in a way that they'd be were highly compliant to the human to ensure it'd be safe to use the clones. But...”

“But?” Zhang Heng raised his eyebrows.

“But no matter how much the clones believed that they were born to serve humans when they left the factory, and how gentle and honest their characters were designed, many began to gradually resist their employers after long-term usage. After all, they have the same DNA as humans. I guess resistance is one of their instincts.

“Due to the security issues, these clones can’t be put into large-scale commercial use. Other than that, ordinary people are also afraid of clones. Some extremists had even started recruiting to hunt and kill all clones. So the scientists had to keep looking for other ways to salvage this situation.”

“Is that why they decided to give those clones a fake identity?” Zhang Heng asked.

“Yes. Scientists have found out that the clones’ behavior would be the most stable in this situation. They have to make sure that the clones did not know that they were clones. Other than the users and the companies behind them, no one else would realize that they are clones. Naturally, there would be no conflict. And at the same time, the companies have shortened their single-use duration.”

“Rewrite their memories once a month?”

“It doesn’t have to be once a month. It only applies to those who can fight well like you. Once someone like you realizes that they are a clone, it may cause great harm to society. Hence, the memories of a clone like you would be rewritten once a month,” Xu Qian replied with a trembling voice.

“Well, how many clones are there in New Shanghai 0297 now?” Zhang Heng continued to ask.

“I don’t know. I really don’t know. The number of clones has always been a company secret.” Xu Qian became more and more anxious, “I... I have told you too much. I can’t go on. Once they find out that I had this conversation with you, my citizen ID will be included in the control list. The federal government will start to monitor me all the time and all the companies will refuse to provide me any form of information. As for the damage you will cause after you lose control, I have to bear at least one-third of the responsibility. My boyfriend does illegal business sometimes. He absolutely wouldn’t want his significant other to be on the watch list all the time. I will lose him because of this. So please...”

“Oh. That’s too bad,” Zhang Heng said.

“Yes. You know my current situation. This marriage is very important to me,” Xu Qian nodded.

“No. You misunderstood what I meant,” Zhang Heng said. “What I mean is if someone captures me and reads my memory, you might have to change your boyfriend.”

“What do you... mean?” Xu Qian could not understand what Zhang Heng had just told her.

“I killed about 30 people at the lowest level just now,” Zhang Heng said indifferently. “According to you; you have to bear at least a third of the responsibility for the losses I caused after I lose control. But you don’t have to worry too much about it for the time being. Since you lived at the first level before, you must have heard of Mr. G’s name. His men will help me deal with the aftermath. To make that happen, I have to make sure that no one can capture me and read my memory.”

“What?! You just killed more than 30 people?!” A chill rushed up Xu Qian’s spine, and she started to shiver as if she was drenched in a basin of ice water, “This... This is impossible. Are you trying to scare me and prevent me from reporting your anomaly?”

Zhang Heng did not reply to Xu Qian. Instead, he emailed Miss F in front of her, asking to send him some photos of the aftermath.

It sounded like a weird request, but Miss F did not ask any questions.

Half a minute later, Zhang Heng received ten photos of the dead bodies. Other than that, there was also a short video. The person that recorded this video clip stood at a good distance. Hence, the video quality wasn't that good. But one could see that the person in the middle was Zhang Heng with two blades. He killed a mohawk guy while being attack by three or four people.

From the video clip, Zhang Heng slit the mohawk guy's throat. The victim attempted to use his hand to stop the blood from gushing out. Unfortunately, his blood still poured out from the gap between his fingers. Xu Qian watched half of the clip, and she started to cover her mouth. Immediately, Zhang Heng passed the trash can to her with his feet.

Xu Qian then vomited in the trash can.

At the same time, she started to cry, not knowing whether she felt sorry for the people who died in the videos and photos or was she crying for her precarious marriage.

Xu Qian cried for about ten minutes, before gradually stopping her sobbing. She wiped her tears and said to Zhang Heng, "I have never done anything bad to you, nor have I treated you harshly because you are a clone. Why do you treat me like this?!"

"I didn't expect to involve you in this matter," Zhang Heng said. "The good news is, the matter hasn't been discovered so far, which is why I said we need to talk about it."

Chapter 948: Tang

"What do you want me to do?" Xu Qian asked.

"It's very simple. Just pretend that nothing happened. Forget about tonight. I can even help you continue to find the stalker. All I need is nine days. After nine days, you can contact G7Z. Report what happened to me. Tell them that I found out that I am a clone, and I killed more than 30 people at the lowest level of this city. You can tell them whatever you want. Just make sure that they don't suspect you. After that, you can continue to be with your rich boyfriend, get engaged, and even marry him. After that, you can move to the fourth level and live your life as a rich wife."

"This is impossible. As long as you are captured, they will know that I am lying. Didn't you listen to what I said? You can't hide it from them," Xu Qian desperately pleaded.

"Yes, but only if I am caught." Zhang Heng said calmly.

"No rogue human clone can escape the authorities. I told you that almost all defective clones are captured within 24 hours."

"Not everyone. I know that a clone is still alive, and no one could capture him so far," Zhang Heng said.

"How's that possible?" Xu Qian looked at Zhang Heng in disbelief, "The longest a defective clone lasted before being captured was three days. The only exception is a female clone named Tang."

"Tang?"

"Of course, this isn't her real name. It's just her online handle that she uses on the internet. She and I belong to the same entertainment company, and she could be considered a senior of mine. Even when I

was at my peak, I couldn't catch up with her. After that incident, the company deleted all the information related to her. However, I still managed to find her photos on the internet.

"It was said that when the company created her, they looked the hundred most beautiful actresses in the entire Federation. They then selected the most beautiful parts of each of them, singled out the corresponding genes for those parts, and merged them together. Finally, Tang was born. Some say she was the epitome of perfection. Every inch of her skin and expression is flawless. With only one look, even the man with the hardest heart will fall for her. On the first day of her livestream, her viewer numbers set a historical record. And the number of her fans increased every single day. Until now, no one can surpass her."

"What happened to her afterward?" Zhang Heng asked.

"Some powerful people from the fifth level were involved in this matter. The official report says that she was invited to a manor on the fifth level to attend a private dinner one night. Suddenly she lost control and killed the host of the banquet and two guests. Another guest was seriously injured. The latter also cut off one of her arms when he fought against her. However, there have been lots of rumors about this matter circling around the internet. Although Tang hasn't been a streamer for a long time, she still has formidable numbers of diehard fans who think the guests attending the banquet that night covered up the truth. Until now, no one knows what happened in that manor that night."

"What happened to Tang after that?" Zhang Heng raised his eyebrows.

"She suffered from serious injuries that night, but she still managed to escape from the manor. And she didn't get caught by the bodyguards."

"Where did she escape to?"

"She... chose to burn herself alive and stream the whole thing online," Xu Qian said. "Although the authorities cut the stream shortly after she lit herself, the police managed to locate her with the tracker she had in her body. You see, the only way to escape all this is death."

"Thank you for your suggestion, but I am alive and well. And I plan to continue to stay alive." Zhang Heng grabbed a handful of melon seeds from the coffee table and fed it to the hamster in the cage.

"In short, this matter did not end with her death. A series of conflicts broke out after that. Her fans even attacked our entertainment company and the related departments. But at that time, I had not come to New Shanghai 0297. So I am not sure what actually happened. This matter has become taboo, one that cannot be mentioned within the company. All the information that people received came from the internet. Ever since that incident, our company has stopped hiring cloned streamers."

Xu Qian looked at Zhang Heng after she was done talking, "Do you now know why I told you that it's impossible for you to escape?"

"I can understand what you are trying to express, but I am not Tang," Zhang Heng calmly responded. "It's your choice. If you report the abnormality to G7Z now, there is no doubt that you will also face a big problem. You will need to take part of the responsibility for my murder spree, and our conversation tonight will be discovered too. According to what you told me, you will lose your boyfriend, cause him a lot of trouble, or..."

“Or what?”

“Or you can take a leap of faith and do what I say. We have ten days left in our service contract. After nine days, you can contact the security company. As long as you follow what I teach you, you will be able to blame everything on me. They will believe that I learned about my identity through other channels but not from you. After that, I make my escape. As a law-abiding citizen, you immediately report it to my company. So as long as I’m not caught, you won’t have any trouble. And if you’re lucky, you can even get married.”

Xu Qian looked like she was deep in thought after hearing this.

Zhang Heng was not in a hurry. So, he continued to talk slowly, “I know you don’t think I can escape, but with the second option, at least you’ll have high hopes of going to the fourth level, right?”

“If they know I worked with you to help you escape, there will be more troubles waiting for me,” Xu Qian smiled bitterly.

“Benefits are always accompanied by risks. I believe no one knows that better than you. You said that what you are best at is to seize the opportunities at the right time. This is how you could climb from the lowest level to the third level. And now, there is no doubt that a good opportunity has presented itself in front of you,” Zhang Heng said.

Xu Qian closed her eyes, seemingly thinking through Zhang Heng’s proposal. After a while, she opened her eyes again. “You are lying to me, right? Although you keep saying that I have a choice, I, in fact, don’t have any. Who is the person that sent you those photos and video? A clone should have no friends or relatives.”

“Oh, she is a friend I just made tonight. You are right. If you choose the first or the second option, but you suddenly regret it halfway, no matter which level you are at, she will find you,” Zhang Heng said.

Chapter 949: Suspect

After realizing that she had no options left, Xu Qian was no longer as scared as she was in the beginning. Such was the nature of human beings. When there was only one option left, they would stop thinking too much about it. However, Xu Qian still didn’t sleep well that night. Her eyes looked a little red and swollen the next morning. It was obvious that she had been crying in her room all night long.

However, after she put on some makeup, she looked normal again. Xu Qian ordered two takeaway breakfasts as usual, and they were delivered by drone. However, she only took two bites, and she put down her chopsticks. She then looked at Zhang Heng sitting opposite her. She looked like wanted to ask him what he planned to do next.

“Yesterday, I contacted E-Goat with the help of a fan from the group. We will be meeting E-Goat at two in the afternoon. After breakfast, I’ll do a background check on him. After that, we will go over and meet him together,” Zhang Heng said. Wiping his mouth after finishing his food, he said, “If we want to keep this secret from my company, we will have to behave like we always have. As I said, I will continue investigating the stalker for you. It’s crucial that we do this together. Once this is done, no one will suspect you after you report my anomaly nine days later.”

Xu Qian didn't believe that Zhang Heng could escape the authorities, but she was impressed by his composure, especially after he realized he was a clone. There was almost no emotional fluctuation on him. If an ordinary person encountered such an incident, there was a high chance the person would experience a complete mental breakdown. Coupled with the existence of the memory encoder, the person would start to doubt their own memories or even deny their existence.

Zhang Heng, however, didn't encounter any of these problems. Being a clone was his identity in this dungeon, and he had no idea who the relatives and friends in his contract list were too.

He didn't need to take public transport this time when he went out, driving the sports car Xu Qian's boyfriend gave her instead. And he did not return to Xu Qian's apartment until 1 pm to pick her up.

After that, the two headed to the apartment where E-Goat lived. Like Xu Qian, E-Goat also lived on the third level and worked as a network engineer. However, the area he lived in wasn't nearly as luxurious as Xu Qian's area, not to mention it was a little further away from the city center.

The fans in the group had contacted E-Goat in advance as per Zhang Heng's request. He chose to meet him at a small restaurant below his house. This was also the place E-Goat had his meals after he got off work. The familiar environment should help him be a little less vigilant.

E-Goat headed down ten minutes early and walked into the small restaurant.

According to the information that Zhang Heng collected, E-Goat was 29 years old this year. Formerly known as Li Chong, he had been living on the third level for five years. In the beginning, he had a roommate who was supposed to be his classmate. After the latter got himself a girlfriend, he moved out to live with her. Since then, E-Goat had been living alone.

During this period, he hadn't made any friends of the opposite sex. Although his appearance and income were decent, and some of the young girls in his company had shown interest in him, E-Goat had always treated them coldly. Soon, all the ladies in his company began to realize that E-Goat was a weird person. After that, no one bothered him. Thus, E-Goat continued to live his peaceful life alone.

There were even rumors saying that E-Goat was a person with no emotions. However, Zhang Heng knew that people who rarely expressed themselves had the tendency to acquire an unhealthy obsession over something or someone they loved.

E-Goat had been paying attention to Xu Qian since the first day she started livestreaming. He witnessed Xu Qian grow from an unpopular streamer to one with a considerable fan base. And E-Goat had never missed Xu Qian's stream before. Hence, it was logical if anyone thought that he was madly in love with her.

The more Zhang Heng investigated, the more suspicious E-Goat became to him.

He and Xu Qian were in the car now, monitoring E-Goat in the restaurant through the miniature camera hidden in the flowerpot. The latter had just found a seat at a corner, and the waiter apparently knew him and was excited to serve him. He said hello, but E-Goat responded coldly. He glared at the waiter before turning his attention somewhere else.

While Zhang Heng kept his eye on E-Goat, he also paid attention to other customers in the small restaurant. He appeared to be eliminating all potential threats. Then, suddenly, E-Goat turned around and landed his attention on Xu Qian's sports car.

Although the glass surrounding the car had been specially treated, and no one was supposed to be able to look inside, Xu Qian could not help but feel anxious. "He doesn't know, right?" she asked.

"What do you mean?"

"Know that we are here to ambush him."

"If he knows, he would've never headed to the restaurant."

Having said that, Zhang Heng did not wait any longer. His preliminary investigations proved E-Goat had the motives to stalk Xu Qian. And from the follow-up observations, E-Goat's figure also matched the stalker he met in the mall a few days ago. Hence, Zhang Heng had to do something about it. He sent another message to the fan who helped him, asking the latter to tell E-Goat to order some food first.

The fan helping Zhang Heng didn't suspect anything and immediately sent E-Goat an email. He happened to cooperate so well with Zhang Heng because he told him that Xu Qian was very grateful to E-Goat, her number one fan who had stayed with her all these years. Apparently, she wanted to express her gratitude by giving E-Goat a surprise.

The situation caused that fan to be immensely jealous.

When E-Goat received the email and started to order his food, Zhang Heng and Xu Qian had already got out of the car and were walking towards the small restaurant. Compared with Zhang Heng's calmness, Xu Qian was deep in thought. She even thought about who she should call for help if E-Goat beat Zhang Heng in a fight or if the two were evenly matched.

But it turned out that she overthought the whole thing.

E-Goat was just a network engineer, after all, not a professionally trained combatant. Although he was vigilant, he was no match for Zhang Heng. Before he raised his head, Zhang Heng had already sat beside him with a small knife pointed at his waist.

When E-Goat realized what was happening, he raised his head. Seeing Xu Qian on the opposite side, his expression changed drastically. His reflex told him that he should get up and flee. However, Zhang Heng placed his hand on his shoulder, realizing that his body could not move. He then heard Zhang Heng's voice,

"Hi, E-Goat. I think we need to introduce ourselves properly."

Chapter 950: Lies And Truth

E-Goat's breathing became more and more rapid. Zhang Heng then noticed that his condition wasn't triggered by the knife on his waist, but because of Xu Qian on the opposite side.

He seemed to be unable to look at Xu Qian. His cheeks turned red after a glance at her, and he hurriedly looked away.

Xu Qian's expression was complicated. After a while, she said, "Do you know who I am?"

E-Goat hesitated but finally nodded.

"I... thank you very much for your support for me over the years. To be honest, I thought about meeting you a long time ago, but I didn't expect to meet you in this situation." Xu Qian lifted her hair while talking.

E-Goat did not reply.

"You should know why I came to you. Don't worry. You can tell me the truth. I promise you that I will not call the police. And I will not ask my... uh, bodyguards to avenge me."

E-Goat then looked at Zhang Heng beside him. And Zhang Heng had already lifted his hands from his shoulder, and the knife pointing at him was gone as well.

With the distance between the two, it was impossible for E-Goat to run away. Previously, Zhang Heng was using the knife to remind him not to make any stupid moves. Seeing that E-Goat did not react irrationally, Zhang Heng put the knife away. After that, he waved at the waiter and ordered a pot of scented tea.

The three of them did not talk to each other while waiting for tea.

Until the waiter brought the pot of scented tea over, poured a cup for each of them, and stepped aside, E-Goat said in a low voice, "What kind of truth do you want to know?"

"Four days ago, was it you who followed me in the mall?" Xu Qian looked into the eyes of E-Goat.

The latter opened his mouth to answer but was stopped by Zhang Heng before he could speak.

"Wait, let us do a small ritual before you answer the question."

"What kind of ritual?" E-Goat frowned.

At the next moment, Zhang Heng cut E-Goat's thumb with a knife. And E-Goat wanted to retract his hand subconsciously, but Zhang Heng grabbed it first. After that, Zhang Heng picked up an empty cup next to him and drew some blood from E-Goat's wound.

When Zhang Heng got what he needed, he proceeded to cut one of his fingers, squeezed a few drops of blood into the cup, and mixed them. Once that was done, he took out a piece of parchment paper that he brought from Old Man Geng that morning and wrote, 'I swear that I would never lie.'

"What is this? Indian Witchcraft?" E-Goat asked coldly.

"Something like that." Zhang Heng did not care what he said. He then took out the Oath Rings, gave one to E-Goat, and put one on himself so that he would know whether E-Goat was lying.

After Zhang Heng was done with the ritual, Xu Qian silently handed each of them a band-aid.

"Now, you can answer her question," Zhang Heng said.

E-Goat went silent for a moment before nodding. "Yes, I was the one who followed you in the mall."

After speaking, he deliberately looked at Zhang Heng again, but Zhang Heng made no response. He signaled him to continue talking.

“Why are you following me?” Xu Qian then asked.

“Because... I have a psychological problem. I am a stalker.” E-Goat lowered his head.

To which Zhang Heng quickly said, “You are lying.”

“I’m not,” E-Goat defended himself.

“This is another lie,” Zhang Heng took a sip of the tea in front of him and said slowly.

“You can tell me the truth. I told you that no matter what the truth is, I won’t hold you accountable,” Xu Qian pleaded sincerely from across the table. She hesitated and reached out and held E-Goat’s hand.

The latter’s body trembled.

Even Zhang Heng, who was sitting next door, could feel E-Goat’s heartbeat speeding up, and his breathing had become even faster. However, Xu Qian did not rush him.

After another two minutes, E-Goat finally raised his head. The expression on his face looked a little distorted as if he was laughing and crying at the same time.

“You said you want the truth? But I don’t think you want to hear it.”

Xu Qian seemed to think of something. She then wanted to let go of E-Goat’s hand, but the next moment, E-Goat took the initiative to grab hers. And the latter’s palm became hotter.

What he was about to say would give Xu Qian a huge shock.

“I follow you because... I like you.”

“This is the truth,” Zhang Heng said while drinking the tea, “but you might want to consider letting go of her hand first. Ms. Xu Qian is my employer. If you hold her like this, I will have to take action.”

E-Goat finally let go of her hand. And he seemed to have exhausted all his strength to tell her the truth. He then leaned his body on the back of the chair.

The look on Xu Qian’s face was a little awkward. She retracted her hand and said casually, “But, but... I have a boyfriend.”

Once again, E-Goat gave no response.

“And we are about to get engaged. He lives on the fourth level. Other than that, he also owns a small factory and a beautiful little villa by the lake. We have agreed that we will go boating on the lake after we get married. I’ve always thought of you as my friend and brother.

“I have always wanted to tell you this for a while now,” Xu Qian added later.

E-Goat still did not say a word. He looked like he had lost his soul.

“Sorry,” Xu Qian blurted last.

“Do you have anything else to ask?” Zhang Heng then asked.

“No, no more.”

Although she found the person stalking her, Xu Qian did not feel as relieved as she thought she would. On the other hand, E-Goat’s sudden confession made her feel like she was sitting on pins and needles. While this problem was solved, she still needed to deal with Zhang Heng’s problem. That was what gave Xu Qian a headache.

She even started to regret that she had hired a bodyguard.

“You are finished, but I still have a few technical questions I want to ask him.”

Zhang Heng did not intend to evaluate the relationship between the two. He put down the teacup and said to E-Goat, “You are a network engineer. Can you tell me how you hacked into Xu Qian’s apartment?”

Zhang Heng asked this question because he wanted to prepare himself for his escape in the future. He had an Lv2 hacking skill, but the technology in this dungeon was more advanced. And technology for network security had improved as well. Zhang Heng wanted to compare his hacking with E-Goat’s.

However, E-Goat shook his head when he heard Zhang Heng’s question. “I only followed her once in the mall. I have never hacked into her apartment.”

What surprised Zhang Heng was not E-Goat’s answer but Oath Ring’s reaction. It was not hot, which could only mean that E-Goat was telling the truth.