

Am I A God 171

Chapter 171: Vibrations and a Bout of Insomnia

“You’ve changed,” Elizabeth said, shooting Zhao Yao an icy stare.

“Changed how?”

“You don’t give a s**t about us now that there’s a new cat,” Dust Ball remarked, shaking her little head, “You men are all the same. It’s always out with the old, in with the new.”

“I don’t like this Scottish fold. We should sterilize her. Her power is too dangerous,” Elizabeth added coolly.

Roly Poly chimed in as well. “The cat-to-floor-area ratio here is a getting quite unfavorable.”

“I agree,” Dust Ball continued, “Her presence is tearing us apart, Zhao Yao! You’re too biased towards her. If she and I both fell into the sea, who will you save first?”

The three supercats piled sentence after sentence on top of each other’s words. They got increasingly carried away, completely disregarding Zhao Yao even though he was standing right in front of them.

This made him purse his lips.

He understood that cats did not like new additions to the family. Normal cats would grow aggressive when that happened to exert their dominance and fight for their rightful territory. Supercats may be a whole lot smarter, but they still shared these same tendencies.

This snoring episode was just the first spark of tension. It lit the fuse for even conflicts in the future. Zhao Yao knew that if he did not stamp it out now, the hostility the rest bore towards Rice Cake would explode.

Like a parent disciplining wayward children, he had to be firm. And a little dramatic.

“Yes, I have changed, haven’t I?” he seethed, “I think I’ve become too nice recently. Now, look at you. You’ve repaid my kindness with disrespect. Have you forgotten who your master is?”

As Zhao Yao spoke, the cats could sense a deadly, black aura radiating from him. It seemed to shoot through the air, rocketing right at them like a bullet.

Roly Poly was the first to respond.

“Oh no! Zhao Yao is angry!” he cried, dropping to his knees and covering his head with his paws.

He started shaking violently in fear, which activated his power of invisibility. Within seconds, he was disappeared. All that remained was a pool of yellow liquid on the floor.

Roly Poly had wet himself.

Elizabeth’s pupils had contracted in fright. Strands of her long, white hair had started to the ground out of stress, but she spoke up anyway.

“We don’t have to be scared! What’s the worst he can do? Hit us? That’s nothing, am I right, Dust Ball?”

She turned around to find Dust Ball has disappeared as well. The dwarf had sucked herself into the safety of the extradimensional belly.

Elizabeth turned back around, shaking.

She had been abandoned.

“I’m not afraid of you, Zhao Yao!” she exclaimed, gulping.

Zhao Yao ignored her. Instead, he cast his eye to the urine splattered on the floor.

“Roly Poly, you better clean up your mess or I’m making you lick the floor dry,” he glared.

“Yes, sir!” the fat cat said obediently, revealing his physical form.

He sprung to the kitchen and returned with a wad of paper towels hanging from the corner of his mouth.

Zhao Yao then flexed his fingers menacingly before reaching into his mouth. He hooked one finger and threw a struggling Dust Ball out. The cat hung onto his lips, kicking and screaming.

“I don’t want to come out! Let me go!”

“Too late now,” Zhao Yao said simply, his eyes flashing red.

Dust Ball immediately froze up and fell to the ground with a thud.

Zhao Yao sauntered towards the sofa. He reached underneath one of its seats and pulled out a small bag of catmint. He then picked up a lighter on the table with his free hand.

“See this? This is 99% pure catmint imported all the way from Yunnan. It’s good stuff,” he taunted.

Zhao Yao flicked the wheel of the lighter, producing a flame. He made sure Dust Ball’s eyes were on him before he held the catmint over the fire, burning all of it into smoke and dust.

“One gram is enough to give you a high you would never forget. Alas, it’s all gone now,” he said.

He waved one hand to dissipate the dust for dramatic effect.

“Nooooooo!” Dust Ball cried, leaping and reaching for the remnants of the catmint.

Zhao Yao now turned his attention to Elizabeth, whose hair was falling at an alarming rate.

“Don’t come any closer!” she warned him, “Don’t make me use my powers on you!”

“Threatening me now, are you?” Zhao Yao chuckled darkly.

Instead of advancing towards her, he held up his phone and started typing rapidly.

“In response to your threat, I’ve changed the wifi password. And you, my dear Elizabeth, have no clue what it is!”

The ragdoll’s mouth fell to the floor in shock. She looked up at Zhao Yao in despair, then fell to the floor in slow motion, hair shedding everywhere.

How could she survive without wifi? She had lost her one and only way to watch her favorite drama series. Just thinking about all the TV shows she now could never finish brought her physical pain.

Now that the cats were preoccupied with their own catastrophes, Zhao Yao thought he could finally deal with Rice Cake. Unfortunately for him, there were more than three cats in the house.

His ears twitched as he picked up the suspiciously soothing sound of water flowing. He whipped around and was greeted with a horrific sight.

Mango had planted his bum squarely on Rice Cake’s face. He had also started peeing directly on her.

“No!” Zhao Yao exclaimed.

There was a bit of movement behind Rice Cake’s eyelids. She was starting to stir.

Zhao Yao wasted no time in forming an illusion around her, obscuring Mango’s stench.

When Rice Cake woke up, she got to her feet gingerly. There was a quiver in her nose as she sniffed the air.

“Huh. Why did I dream that my head was being peed on?” she wondered, confused.

Her attention quickly shifted from her strange dream to an overflowing food dish that was placed mere meters away. It smelt absolutely divine and looked absolutely mouthwatering. It caused a surge in her appetite.

She shuffled forward and took a few massive bites before dozing off again. Her head was smashed into the food, thunderous snores blowing bits of it everywhere.

Zhao Yao stepped out from behind her, wiping sweat from his brow. He removed his illusion to reveal that they were now in the extradimensional belly. The appetizing food dish had lured Rice Cake there.

“Phew,” he whistled, “That was close.”

His nose crinkled when he caught a whiff of Mango’s pee. The unpleasant stink was radiating off Rice Cake, who could sleep peacefully because he was still obscuring her senses.

“Oh Mango, you stupid cat,” he muttered, rolling up his sleeves.

He shrouded his own sense of smell and knelt next to Rice Cake, grimacing as he cleaned her up.

By the time he was done washing both her and himself, it was already four in the morning.

“It’s okay, I can still sleep for three hours. Everything’s fine,” Zhao Yao told himself.

He climbed into bed and closed his bloodshot eyes.

Sadly, this peace did not last.

He was so exhausted that he had not noticed the furry thingy climbing onto his bed and settling by his pillow. Just as he was about to fall asleep, it started talking to him.

“Zhao Yao,” Matcha sobbed, “I can’t sleep.”

Zhao Yao’s eyes snapped open, his pupils clouded with fury.

He grabbed Matcha with one hand and tossed him off the bed. Then, he shut his eyes again.

A few minutes later, he felt a ball of fur tunneling through his blanket, wriggling next to his feet.

“Zhao Yao, Zhao Yao, my heart hurts. Is this what it feels like to fall out of love? Is that why it’s called heartbreak? I don’t wanna love anymore.”

Matcha barely finished his monologue when he was kicked off the bed and landed on the floor with a boing.

More time had passed before a wave of warm air grazed Zhao Yao’s ear.

“Zhao Yao!”

Matcha climbed onto the top of his head and started singing, “Never mind I’ll find someone like you. I wish nothing but the best for you too...”

Zhao Yao’s eyes were wide open again. He slowly turned his head to Matcha, who was now belting out another song with emotion.

“In another life, I would make you stay, so I don’t have to say you were the one that got away...”

Now that he finally got Zhao Yao’s undivided attention, Matcha stopped singing and looked at him in the eye.

“Zhao Yao, why did Qian Qian choose the fatty when I love her so much? Are we star-crossed lovers that are destined to never be together?” Matcha asked, his face full of sorrow.

“This is not love, you idiot. You two just played Mobile Legends together a couple times! Don’t be the kind of dumbass that fantasizes about marriage when you see a pretty girl’s photo and starts dreaming about your children together when you see a live stream,” Zhao Yao scolded.

Matcha’s Loyalty -1

“F**k.”

Zhao Yao took a deep breath and turned to Matcha with a kind expression.

“Then again, the fact that you fell in love with Qian Qian after just a few games proves that you’re the best kind of lover there is. You truly are the most faithful cat I’ve ever seen.”

Matcha’s Loyalty +1

Chapter 172: His Ultimate Skill, Their Search

Zhao Yao let out a huge yawn.

He very much wanted to slap the fat cat seated in front of him.

“Damn it. I forgot about those stupid loyalty points.”

He pressed the home button on his phone. It was now five in the morning. The last hour could have been spent on sleeping, but it was wasted thanks to Matcha’s harassment.

“Stupid cat. Now I only have two hours left,” he grumbled to himself.

He took a look at Matcha from the corner of his eye, then turned to him, crossing his legs.

“Let’s continue this conversation tomorrow?” he suggested.

Matcha looked at him with bright green eyes. “No, we need to talk now. I can’t sleep.”

Zhao Yao returned his look with a death glare. “Can’t you just let me sleep for now? I have to wake at 7.30.”

Matcha's expression grew even more bitter. He opened his small mouth and started singing again.

"All by myself~ Don't wanna be all by myself anymore..."

Matcha's Loyalty -1

"What the – ?" Zhao Yao cursed.

Sighing heavily, he sat up straight and rubbed his face, trying to stay awake.

"Alright, alright. Point taken. What's going on? What do you need?"

Matcha placed his white paws on Zhao Yao's thighs and looked up at him with desperation.

"I really, really, really like Qian Qian. I've never liked a cat so much ever! What should I do?" the ginger cat asked earnestly.

Zhao Yao pursed his lips, "C'mon, you don't really like her, do you? You just think she's attractive."

"Plus, I've already imparted to you my skills. Just keep practicing. In a few months, you'll be able to beat that fatty and take Qian Qian up the leaderboard. She'll love you to death," he added.

"But...but I lost today," Matcha said sadly.

He blinked his large eyes a few times at Zhao Yao, "Is there a simpler solution?"

"No," Zhao Yao responded in a deadpan voice, "You lost because you haven't practiced enough. Just practice more and you'll win one day."

Matcha's Loyalty -1

Zhao Yao's lips formed a tight, thin line as the loyalty points took another dip.

“But look at my hands!” Matcha complained, stretching his paws, “I’ve been working hard every day! If I keep it up, all my lovely fur is going to fall. They’ll end up bald!”

Zhao Yao could not help but roll his eyes.

“You just want to skip the hard work to get the girl and jump straight into the mating, don’t you?”

“Hehe, that’s not true,” Matcha laughed, embarrassed, “We should still spend the time to get to know each other. Maybe lick each other’s fur for a start.”

“Idiot,” Zhao Yao thought, pinching the bridge of his nose, “Whatever, let’s just get this over with so I can get some sleep.”

He grabbed his phone from underneath his pillow and flipped through Princess Qian’s photos. After a few quick looks, he used Elizabeth’s powers to craft an illusion that fitted Matcha’s needs.

“Here you go, Matcha.”

The ginger cat gaped at the sight before him. A beautiful cat with luscious long hair and a sweet face had appeared on the bed. She was lounging on a pillow, a soft, sexy glow radiating off her.

Princess Qian was here.

When she lifted her paw to her lips and started licking them indulgently, Matcha could not contain his excitement. His bushy tail shot upwards like a lightning rod and he rushed forward.

Beyond the illusion, Zhao Yao could see that the beautiful cat Matcha was humping enthusiastically was just a cushion.

Matcha’s loyalty went up by a point each time his body tremored.

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Three seconds later, a shiver ran down Matcha's body as he flopped on top of the cushion. A blissful look crossed his face.

Matcha's Loyalty +10

"Seriously? That was worth ten points? Geez, who would have thought that being a wingman was the fastest way to bond?" Zhao Yao scoffed, looking at the panel.

Matcha's points had risen back to the maximum of one hundred points.

"Alright, I still have two hours to sleep. Don't bother me," he said.

Matcha did not respond. He remained motionless, eyes shut, completely relaxed.

It took a mere moment for him to open his eyes again. There was no longer a trace of desperation or sorrow in them. Instead, they were full of fire, energy, and just a touch of disinterest.

He shook his head.

"That was disappointing. Definitely not as mind-blowing as I expected. I don't think I need a female companion after all."

He was experiencing absolutely clarity in his thoughts now. The longing he felt before had disappeared completely. His adoration for Princess Qian had dissipated too.

"Hmm, that was stupid. I am George Matcha, sole descendant of the Jiangmen Folds, the almighty savior of all cats. How could I have wasted so much time chasing some cat?"

He pursed his lips. "I don't need a female in my life. I just need my phone. Speaking of, I better make up for lost time."

With that, he switched on his phone and started playing Mobile Legends. He was still battling when the sun started to rise at dawn. That was also when Princess Qian sent him a private message.

“Luban oppa, whatcha up to?”

Matcha was completely unconcerned.

“Too bad, princess, I’m not interested. You can’t tempt me ever again.”

He turned back to Mobile Legends and never replied.

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That morning, a flurry of events was taking place in another building in the city.

Lin Chen hurried down a corridor that was cordoned with barricade tape. He entered the room that he was called to. The floor was covered in footprints and paw prints.

“Captain Lin,” a member of the team called out to him.

He was a slightly chubby man.

“The neighbors called the police at around ten in the morning. The door was unlocked. There should be five people and 32 cats here. The people are unconscious and the doctor is not sure when they will come to.”

“Unconscious?” Lin Chen asked, stroking his chin thoughtfully, “I believe a British Shorthair named Fatty Bombom stayed here for a while.”

“Yes, the family that lived here used to breed British Shorthairs. A few of the cats were awakened after the incident,” the chubby man explained, “The owners were never ambitious. We registered them as civil servants so that they could get a nice paycheck and benefits every month. They didn’t ask for more or stir any trouble. They just continued running the cattery as usual.”

“Oh, they just opened a cat cafe too,” he added.

Lin Chen nodded silently. A square-jawed man standing beside him spoke up.

“Putting people in a coma is Sun Meng’s modus operandi. I’ve told you time after time that she was a threat, but you never listened. We’ve got to capture her and put an end to this nonsense,” he said solemnly.

“I admit that we’ve underestimated her,” Lin Chen looked the man in the eye, “Help me out here. Why is she attacking this cattery and her fellow apostles?”

The square-jawed man returned Lin Chen’s steely stare.

“Sun Meng can control a person’s dreams. She has to enter the dreamscape to do that. Spending too much time submerged in it might have stunted her mentally. She’s not quite normal anymore.”

“Okay, but based on your previous intel, she can only control the dreams of one person at any one time. So what’s happened here? We’ve got five people down.”

“I’m not sure. Her power could have evolved. She could have somehow learned to combine a few different powers. We know she has two more supercats. She was hiding that from us when we last interviewed her.”

As the two men continued the discussion, the phone in the chubby man’s hand started to ring.

“Hello?” he started.

“Kirin Cat Cafe was hit as well? Everyone is unconscious?”

“Yes, I understand.”

“Captain Lin,” he looked to Lin Chen.

Lin Chen glanced at the square-jawed man, then walked out the door before the chubby man had to say another word.

“Let’s go.”

Chapter 173: The Sleepless and the Well-Rested

The crease between Xiao Yu's brows grew deeper the longer she stared at her phone screen.

"Why hasn't that silly cat responded?" she wondered, "His replies have always been instant."

Her unblinking gaze was disrupted when she heard a woman's voice coming from outside the bedroom. "Xiao Yu, are you up? It's time to go to a school!"

"I'll be right there!" she shouted back.

Xiao Yu turned back to her phone and shook her head.

"Forget it, he probably didn't see my message. I'll get my money another day. He's stupid enough to fall for whatever I say."

She then spotted Fish Ball from the corner of her eye. He was sprawled across the sheets, fast asleep. She unceremoniously kicked him off the bed.

"What's happened? Is it another earthquake?" Fish Ball asked, struggling to open his eyes.

"Don't you have your own bed? Why are you on mine?" Xiao Yu asked in a tone that could have frozen peas.

Fish Ball uttered a loud meow in response and scrambled for his phone. He started typing rapidly.

"It's all that stupid dog's fault! He stole my bed! I was so cold without it."

He blinked up at her innocently.

"I can only have fallen asleep if I'm in your arms," he added.

Xiao Yu did not reply. Her face merely puckered. She jumped off the bed, got dressed, and left the room. She was immediately greeted by Noodle, who wagged his tail excitedly and started circling her.

Her mom's voice sounded from the kitchen again.

"He has been waiting outside your door all morning. He wouldn't even eat when we told him that his food is ready."

"Aww, is this true?" Xiao Yu asked happily, squeezing the husky's face, "My adorable little Noodle."

Her happy expression transformed into a death glare when she turned to Fish Ball.

"You're full of lies, aren't you? Noodle has been sleeping by my door the whole night!"

Fish Ball watched in defeated shock as she faced the husky again to give it a big hug.

"You devious monster!" he thought, staring daggers at the dog.

Noodle returned the cat's hateful look with a side eye of his own.

"This house only has space for one pet – me. A supercat with rubbish skills like you will only get in my way," he chuckled darkly to himself.

After one final head rub, Xiao Yu got to her feet and took a seat at the dining table. She ate breakfast quietly, bare feet swinging in the air.

Fish Ball and Noodle were busy eating as well. They had stuffed their faces into their respective bowls, gulping food down noisily.

Spirit Cat was hovering over them, undetected. His eyes were fixed on the dog food that Noodle was thoroughly enjoying.

“I wonder what that tastes like.”

“I can’t put it in words. Whatever it is, it’s awesome,” the husky responded.

Ever since he possessed the dog’s body, Ho Hao Cang started being able to communicate with the cat. He was able to understand his meows and even talk to him telepathically.

He had no clue why this was happening. He did not know that by using Spirit Cat’s power to keep himself alive, he was now half a supercat himself. A supercat without powers, that is.

“Hey, how’s your mission going? Have you located Ares and the gang?” the husky asked.

“I returned to the villa but it’s been sealed off. I can’t find any trace of them.”

Noodle stopped eating for a moment, his eyes blazing.

“That’s alright. Just keep on searching. Once you find them, lead them here. I’ve got a plan.”

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Noodle’s determination and drive were completely absent at the cat cafe.

Zhao Yao stared at the table blankly. He looked quite frail with the dark circles under his puffy eyes. He felt weak and disoriented too. He had barely slept three hours the night before.

“Yo,” Shi Yu greeted, coming closer to take a good look at Zhao Yao.

“What happened to you? Did you spend the whole night being defeated at PlayerUnknown’s Battleground?”

Zhao Yao shot her a glare.

“Preposterous. I would never lose like that. I was up all night taking care of the cats.”

He sighed dramatically. “Raising those little rascals has not been easy. To think I have to do it all alone. It’s not easy being me, you know.”

As he spoke, Matcha paused in front of them, swishing his tail. He stared up at Zhao Yao, his eyes rolling back into his head from extreme sleepiness.

“Zhao Yao, I played Mobile Legends through the night. I haven’t slept a wink. Can I take leave today?” he asked.

Like Matcha, Elizabeth, Roly Poly, and Dust Ball all wore the same, exhausted expression. Only Mango remained energetic and full of life. He was currently scrambling around the cafe in high spirits.

It was obvious that he had somehow slept through last night’s earth-shattering snoring.

Roly Poly batted his lashes at Zhao Yao.

“Shall we take a break today? We’re too exhausted to serve our customers well,” the fat cat reasoned.

Zhao Yao’s vacant eyes bored into his.

“I slept the least of all of us. Do you see me asking for a break? Why do you even need a break? All you do all day is sleep in the customers’ arms! I can’t sleep in their arms even if I wanted to. A break? No way.”

Zhao Yao then turned to Baiquan.

“And you. Where were you last night? Why didn’t you help out?”

“I was asleep,” Baiquan responded truthfully.

Zhao Yao gaped at him. “You could sleep through that kind of snoring?”

“I always put on my earphones and listen to music in bed.”

Zhao Yao sighed.

“Alright, get to work. I’ll just rest here.”

He intended to slump onto his usual table in the corner and nap.

The moment he sat down, however, he remembered that the earthquake cat was still stuck in the depths of the extradimensional belly.

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Ares the Persian cat stared forward blankly, struggling to keep his eyes open. They were puffy and ringed with red. He looked like he was in extreme emotional distress, the kind that will cause him to collapse at any moment.

Wave after wave of loud buzzing noises had kept him up all night. It sounded like a thousand angry cicadas screeching right in his ears.

The worst part was that ever since the noise started, it showed no sign of stopping. Instead, it grew stronger and more forceful, literally shaking the ground. Ares felt like even his organs were vibrating from the impact.

At wit’s end, he released his reflective field to shield himself and his friends from the reverberations.

He would halt his power every half hour, checking to see if the noise had died down. Unfortunately, it never did.

“Are you kidding me?” Ares groaned, checking the time, “What kind of monster does renovation work at 4 a.m.?! ”

He looked around him in despair. The rest of the cats were lying in a heap on the floor, blissfully asleep. Ares had made sure that the range of his power covered his friends as well so they could continue sleeping.

It was an altruistic move that required Ares to sacrifice both his mental and emotional well-being. He had to stay up, all alone, in order to maintain the deflective field.

He grew terribly exhausted and envious of everyone else, who could enjoy unadulterated rest. It felt almost unfair.

Ares could no longer remain selfless, especially when he watched Garfield turning to his side and curling luxuriously into a ball, drooling. He raised one paw, then smacked it squarely on Garfield's face.

"What..? What's happened?" Garfield asked, jumping to his feet in an instant, "Has the giant cat returned?"

His sudden movement had caused the rest of the cats to wake, alarmed. All four supercats descended into a nervous panic that led them to scramble in different directions, hiding in whatever boxes they could find.

"You useless lumps of fur," Ares seethed, "This noise has been going on for far too long! Do you expect me to block it out for you all night? I haven't slept a wink!"

Garfield was the first to spring into action.

"Please, God, please let this end qui -,"

Four pairs of paws covered his mouth before he could complete his plea.

"How dare you make more wishes!" Ares raged, fire burning in his eyes.

Fujin the Siamese cat stuck out his tongue as he heaved a sigh of relief.

"Oh, that was close. This rascal almost wasted another wish."

“Boys, desperate times call for desperate measures. We’ve got to tie him up,” Ares stated.

Within a few minutes, the cats wrapped Garfield up like a mummy with the tape and rope that they ripped from carton boxes. He struggled throughout the process but was unable to throw them off.

He could not speak because of the strip of tape tightly pressed against his lips, but he was yelling at his so-called friends telepathically.

“Hey! Why are you tying me up? I was just trying to help!”

“Help? Wasting our wishes isn’t helping, you idiot!” Ares turned from Garfield to the rest, “Make sure you all keep an eye on him. If he secretly makes another wish, beat him up.”

Just as Ares gave his command, the constant noise stopped as instantly as when I started. He blinked his eyes rapidly a few times, then twitched his furry ears.

“It’s finally over?”

Outside the extradimensional belly, Zhao Yao sensed that Rice Cake has finally started to stir.

She opened her eyes gingerly, revealing orbs that shone brightly. She stretched, arching her back with a series of loud cracks from her joints.

She then opened her mouth and emitted one meow. The sound cut through the air and sent a visible ripple through it. It gained momentum as it traveled further, eventually cumulating into a loud boom that echoed throughout the extradimensional belly.

Chapter 174: A Transformation and a Phone Call

After a thorough round of stretching, Rice Cake felt blissfully relaxed. The soreness and tension in her tiny body were gone, her hind legs being the only exception. They still hurt, but the pain had become bearable.

She bounced around, leaping and jumping through the tightest spaces between the cardboard boxes stacked near her. She was in a much better condition now than before her long, thunderous sleep.

She let out a few meows gleefully and was surprised when she saw that they produced visible ripples in the air.

This was a moment of epiphany for Rice Cake. She had never been quite able to control her powers. Now, free from the pain caused by her osteodystrophy, she found that she could rein in the impact of her vibrations.

She also realized that she could not unleash her full powers voluntarily. That, unfortunately, only came when she was in excruciating pain.

Zhao Yao's eyes lit up in understanding as he observed Rice Cake darting around. His thoughts clicked into place as he put two and two together.

"She was healing herself as she slept. That's why she was out cold for so long," he thought.

"Her vibrations must've resonated with the frequency of the Celestial Beats to produce some kind of healing energy. The energy grows stronger when she produces stronger vibrations. That's why she was snoring like a buzz saw last night. I wonder if she's fully recovered."

Much later, Zhao Yao would take Rice Cake to the animal hospital to run multiple tests. The results would reveal that her self-healing was successful in preventing her condition from worsening.

However, the damage that was already done could not be reversed. She would have to bask in the Celestial Beats to recuperate.

At present, Zhao Yao felt that it was safe to release Rice Cake back into the real world.

The Scottish fold had barely gotten used to the transformations in her body when a flash of light pierced the air before her. In the next second, she had fallen out of Zhao Yao's mouth and landed in his arms.

In the glow of the Celestial Beats in the cafe, every last trace of pain was erased. Her eyelids grew heavy as she relaxed, finally at ease.

Zhao Yao scratched the top of her head gently.

“You feel much better now, don’t you? Do you know that you created a ruckus last night?”

Rice Cake did not respond. Instead, she started kneading him on the chest.

Kneading was a cat’s way to show that they were feeling happy and content. This was a habit they picked up as kittens, when they would knead their mother to stimulate milk production. Even as adults, they associated this action with the comfort of nursing.

The instant that Rice Cake had appeared, Elizabeth, Roly Poly, and Dustball had noticed. They wrinkled their noses when they noticed a new scent in the air, then whipped their heads around in unison.

Three pairs of bloodshot eyes were cast firmly on her.

Dust Ball revealed her sharp teeth before emitting a short, sharp hiss.

“It’s that bitch again. Why has Zhao Yao released her? Look at how she’s kneading him! Such a calculated move.”

Elizabeth laughed dryly. “Well, it is the fate of us old cats to be neglected when a new one joins the family. That’s how humans are. To them, new is always better. I’ve seen this too many times before.”

“My darlings,” Matcha interjected, placing his white paws on his chest, “There’s no need to pay her any mind. Being the subject of Zhao Yao’s affections is not altogether a good thing. It lands you in the undesirable position of becoming a public enemy.”

Inexplicably, he was speaking with a British accent.

Elizabeth rolled her eyes at him.

“You’ve been leeching off the five seasons of Downton Abbey that I’ve downloaded to my phone, haven’t you?” she asked in a surly tone.

“My dear, how could you accuse me of such a thing? We are sisters bound by blood. I would never do such a thing,” Matcha responded in a high-pitched voice.

Elizabeth’s face remained frozen and emotionless. “Is that so? With that accent of yours, you must have gone through a couple seasons at least.”

Neither of them paid any attention to Roly Poly, but he decided to join the conversation anyway.

“Bound by blood? That is a luxury we cannot afford. Relationships are fleeting. Here, everything may seem golden one minute, but it turns quickly into ashes the next,” he said with dramatic flair.

“So you’ve been watching Downton Abbey off my phone too!” Elizabeth glared.

Away from the supercats’ squabble, Zhao Yao was still rubbing Rice Cake’s head while he talked to her gently.

“From now on, you’ve got to be a good girl, alright?” he started, “I don’t want any more trouble from you. For starters, you’ve got to stop unleashing your powers whenever you like. I’ll lock you up again if you do that.”

An involuntary tremble ran down Rice Cake’s spine as she remembered how dark and lonely the extradimensional belly had been. She absolutely hated spending time there.

Zhao Yao heaved a sigh of relief when she did not retaliate against his threat. He could finally spend some time relaxing and playing his games in his usual corner in the cafe. He left Rice Cake on the ground by his feet as he started a new match.

The Scottish fold started grooming herself as she glanced around the cafe, her gaze eventually falling on Elizabeth and the rest of the cats.

“Now that my condition has been stabilized, I can start using my powers to their full potential,” she thought to herself.

“I’ve experienced nothing but pain since I was a kitten. This pain has fueled me. It has transformed me from something ordinary to a god among cats. Humans have abandoned, abused, and humiliated us cats for too long. Whatever pain they have inflicted on us, I will inflict on them tenfold. They will feel my wrath!”

Rice Cake scanned the group of cats that were huddled together. “For a start, I can accept these guys as my disciples.”

As she had spent most of her short time here asleep, she had hardly interacted with them and was clueless about what they were like. Hence, she could only judge them based on their size.

“The fattest one should be their leader. That ragdoll seems quite strong too. They won’t be easy targets,” she analyzed.

She could feel a vein throbbing by her temple when she spotted Matcha’s artificially folded ears, “This one is just trash.”

Her eyes eventually fell on Dust Ball.

“Ah, this little guy should be the weakest link. I’ll start with you.”

The formulation of Rice Cake’s grand plan to recruit Dust Ball was interrupted by a loud squeal from behind.

“Oh em gee!” Coco Sun shrieked in excitement, picking up Rice Cake without hesitation.

She was dressed in a maid costume today.

“Bossman, when did the cafe get another adorable Scottish fold?” she demanded.

Zhao Yao looked up at Coco. He studied her costume appreciatively.

“Nice outfit. Did the Cosplay Club take part in another event today?” he asked, then turned to the unwilling cat that was in her arms, “We picked this one off the streets a few days ago. Speaking of, you haven’t been here for a while, have you?”

Rich kids like Coco were his lifeline. He had to make sure that they were going to keep patronizing the cafe.

“What?! Picked off the streets? A beautiful Scottish fold like this? I don’t believe that,” she said, stroking Rice Cake’s head, “Aww, she’s really cute! Is she up for sale?”

“Nope,” Zhao Yao shook his head, “Stop tempting me with money. I’m not selling the cats, no matter the offer.”

He glanced at Rice Cake, who was glaring at Coco with her mouth open, a neat row of sharp teeth on display.

“Be careful with this one. She can be quite aggressive,” he warned.

The moment those words left Zhao Yao’s lips, Rice Cake bit Coco’s hand, a ferocious expression settled on her face.

Instead of shock or fear, Coco simply laughed it off.

“It’s fine. She’s just playing. See? She didn’t hurt me.”

Zhao Yao quickly turned his face away so his eyes could emit a faint red glow without Coco seeing. He chided Rice Cake as he took control of her body.

“Have you gone mad? How can you just attack someone like that!”

“I hate it when humans hold me in their filthy arms! I can work in this cafe, but on one condition – my body is not up for grabs! No touching is allowed,” she retorted.

Zhao Yao pursed his lips.

“I’m sorry,” he said to Coco, “You can’t carry this one. She’ll bite when she’s picked up.”

“But she was doing alright just now!” Coco frowned, disappointed.

Zhao Yao motioned towards Rice Cake, who was baring her teeth at the girl. “She really will take a chunk out of your hand if you keep holding her.”

Coco nodded with a sigh. As a cat lover, she understood that some cats did not like being picked up.

To prevent more violent episodes, Zhao Yao then stuck a big post-it on Rice Cake’s neck. The words “Do not hug or carry” were written on it in capital letters.

Once he was done, his phone started ringing.

It was Inspector Ho.

Chapter 175: A Warning and a Choice

“Hello? Inspector Ho? I think you called the wrong number. I don’t offer the kind of special services you’re looking for,” Zhao Yao joked.

The inspector responded in a serious tone that was the complete opposite of his light jesting.

“I’m calling about something serious. A dangerous female apostle has appeared in Jiangmen City. The police are after her now. She has attacked several places where supercats are known to reside in. To date, more than ten apostles have been hurt here.”

“Oh? I see. Do you need my help?” Zhao Yao’s voice had turned low and grave as well.

“We’re good for now. I just wanted to warn you to be careful. I’ll send you her photo later. If you see her, do not strike. You must run and hide, then notify me, got it?”

“Are you for real? Me, hide?”

The inspector's stern warning was a surprise. He knew very well that Zhao Yao could do a lot more than just protect himself, so why was he advising him to run? Who was this apostle? What was the extent of her powers?

"Trust me, she's not to be messed with. Jiangmen isn't her first rodeo. She wrecked havoc in another city previously, defeating more than 30 apostles. Prolific as she may be, we know nothing about her," Inspector Ho replied.

"More than 30?" Zhao Yao gaped.

He had not even met that many apostles.

As the severity of the situation sunk in, his eyes narrowed, pupils contracting like a cat's.

"To rake up this kind of damage, her abilities must be both powerful and unexpected," he concluded.

Inspector Ho agreed. "Yes. This is why I'm giving you this call. Every officer is warning the apostles they're in touch with about her."

He paused for a moment before continuing.

"Zhao Yao, I know you're powerful, but please, if you meet her, take the careful route and stay away. We have no idea what we're up against."

"Got it," Zhao Yao nodded.

He knew that it was never smart to attack someone whose abilities you did not understand. This ignorance could get even the most experienced fighters killed.

After Inspector Ho hung up, he opened his WeChat group to see if anyone was discussing this mysterious apostle.

Sure enough, there was a bit of talk about her.

Omnipresent: Haven't you guys heard? That female apostle has been attacking all kinds of catteries and cafes in Jiangmen City. It's like she's looking for something...

"What could she be looking for? Earthquake cat?" Zhao Yao pondered, brows furrowed.

He then shook his head, smiling weakly.

"Doesn't matter. She's not making an effort to be sneaky about what she's doing. With the whole government on her trail, she'll be caught soon."

If her powers had great offensive capabilities, it was likely that she was sorely lacking in terms of defence. When the police come for her, she was not going to be able to escape.

Zhao Yao's thoughts were interrupted by a message from Inspector Ho.

The apostle's photo was here.

The girl in the image seemed to be in her early 20s. She had cascading, glossy black hair. To Zhao Yao, she looked like an ordinary university student, not some menace that was capable of attacking more than 30 of their fellow apostles.

After taking one look, he cast the photo and all thoughts of the girl aside. The people that were after him were all dead at this point. Not a soul knew that the earthquake cat was here. It was unlikely that she would target him next.

"Well, it's none of my business. Back to work," he announced.

He then settled into his usual seat and switched on his laptop, ready to finally start the workday.

Rice Cake had been pretty busy as well. Despite the post-it of shame on her neck, three more customers tried to touch her. She bit and kicked them away successfully.

She had no time to deal with their grimy hands. Her focus was entirely on her target, Dust Ball.

She had been observing the tiny cat for a while now. She watched as Dust Ball carefully inched towards the bathroom, pausing frequently to check if anyone was looking at her. When she was just a few meters from the entrance, she rushed forward with a burst of energy and dived right in.

She thought she was cautious, but she failed to notice that Rice Cake's eyes had been on her the whole time.

"Suspicious," Rice Cake thought, "But this works in my favor. I need her isolated when I trounce her."

With a swish of her tail, she made her way to the bathroom as well.

Once Dust Ball entered the room, she looked around, making sure that every automatic litter box was vacated. All but one was empty. Roly Poly walked out of it, a look of satisfaction on his face. He nodded in Dust Ball's direction when he spotted her.

"Ma'am, you're using the toilet too?"

"Yes," Dust Ball nodded.

"Okay. I'll give you some privacy. See you," Roly Poly said.

With great difficulty, he squeezed his fat bum through the cat flap and left.

Now that the bathroom was empty, Dust Ball could start on what she set out to do.

She climbed to the kitty toilet that was on the highest platform. She hesitated for a moment, her eyes glazing over the litter that she was standing on. She replayed the conversation she had with Zhao Yao this morning.

*

“Dusty Girl, it’s not that I don’t want to give you the goods,” Zhao Yao said, scratching the back of Dust Ball’s head, “You know who I am. You know what I stand for. I’ve made it so far in this world because I’m fair. I follow the rules.”

“What rules, you might ask?” he continued, pausing for dramatic effect, “If you do well, I reward you. If you make mistakes, I punish you. Last night, you made a mistake, so I burnt your stash. Do you have a problem with that?”

Dust Ball looked up at him with a look of suspicion, “Are you talking to me?”

“Of course I am. Dusty Girl, I’ve taken you under my wing, so it’s my responsibility to take care of you. I want to give you a second chance.”

He then planted a couple firm pats on her small shoulder.

“The poop accumulated in the extradimensional belly has to be removed. Do that well and I’ll give you the next batch of catmint.”

Dust Ball shot Zhao Yao a death glare.

“Did you just ask me to-,”

Before she could complete her sentence, Zhao Yao had clamped her mouth shut.

“Dusty, you’ve been with me for the shortest amount of time. You’ve never had to get your hands dirty. It’s time for you to play a part in this gang. I’ll leave you to think about what you should do. Come, let’s have breakfast together. Matcha and the rest are waiting.”

*

At first, Dust Ball could not even imagine conceding to Zhao Yao’s ludicrous request.

However, as the morning passed and brought on the afternoon, she found herself reconsidering. She was suffering from catmint withdrawal. She felt uncomfortable and restless and could not think about anything apart from the mint.

She knew that Zhao Yao had installed two automatic litter boxes in the extradimensional belly. They were for Ho Hao Cang's five supercats, who have been putting them to good use.

The toilets were self-cleaning, but all the waste had to go somewhere. Zhao Yao used to deal with that, but he had grown unwilling to do the dirty work.

"Do I...do I really have to vomit poop out of my mouth for a bit of catmint? Is this who I have become?" Dust Ball asked, deflated.

She could not help but recall the unforgettably disturbing sight of Matcha bent over the toilet, hurling poop out of his mouth. She remembered how her view of the world crumbled into ashes when she saw it.

"Do I have to be that kind of cat too?"

While she hesitated, Rice Cake had managed to sneak into the bathroom. She stealthily got closer to Dust Ball so she could observe her.

"What's up with this guy? Why isn't she moving? Constipation?" Rice Cake wondered, "Should I strike now? Or do I wait until she's mid-poop and at her most vulnerable?"

Before a choice could be made, she witnessed something that transformed her expression into one of fear and terror.

"This...this...this cat is vomiting poop?!" she thought, taking a few steps back.

The small commotion she created disrupted the silence in the bathroom.

Dust Ball looked up and turned towards her.

Chapter 176: Vomit and Comprehension

Now that Dust Ball was looking at her squarely in the face, Rice Cake was able to see the mixture of poop and waste that was spewing out of her mouth.

“Ppp...poop monster!” she cried.

Horried, she let out a wail before rushing towards the cat flap. She needed to get away from this revolting creature.

A look of panic briefly crossed Dust Ball’s face. She quickly shut the portal to her extradimensional belly and stopped the violent vomiting before going after Rice Cake.

“You! Stop!” she yelled, “It’s not what you think it is!”

Rice Cake screamed in terror as the poop monster landed before her, obstructing her path to the exit. She stood up straight on her hind legs to widen the gap between them. A shiver ran down her spine.

“You stink!” she exclaimed, covering her face with her paws.

“I...I...,” Dust Ball tried explaining, “I’m not a poop monster. This is my ability -,”

Rice Cake cut her off before she could finish her sentence.

“Your ability is to vomit poop?!” she asked, casting Dust Ball a look of utter disgust.

“No, no, that’s not it! My power is to open the door to a new dimension, one that doesn’t exist on this earth and cannot be reached by anyone else. My mouth is the entrance to that dimension,” Dust Ball said, drawing closer.

“Don’t come any nearer!” Rice Cake warned in a shrill voice, “You’re still a poop monster! You store poop in that dimension you’re talking about!”

She froze for a moment as the dark implications of Dust Ball’s words sunk in.

“You...you said your mouth is a portal to this dimension. Does this mean...does this mean?!”

“No! I didn’t consume the poop!” Dust Ball protested, tiny arms flailing in the air, “I ate five supercats! This is all their poop! They were pooping in the dimension!”

This caused Rice Cake to descend into a state of hysterics.

“Oh my god!” she screamed, pushing herself against the wall behind her, “Don’t eat me! My name is Rice Cake, but I’m not at all edible or tasty. I’ve also not pooped for a day! My stomach is full of s**t!”

“Jesus Christ, lady! Keep quiet!” Dust Ball said angrily, rushing forward to stifle her.

She was humiliated enough knowing that she was vomiting poop for catmint. She did not know what she would do if the other cats learned about this.

Rice Cake looked at her assailant helplessly. She was too frightened to fight off Dust Ball’s paw, which was pressed firmly against her mouth.

Feeling a tinge of guilt, Dust Ball licked the sides of her neck comfortingly.

She was exactly mid-lick when a head popped up through the cat flap.

Matcha’s face broken into a cheeky grin when he spotted the two cats huddled together lovingly.

“Aww, isn’t this cute? Are you girls pooping together? I didn’t know your relationship was already at that stage,” he commented.

“Mind your own damn business,” Dust Ball retorted, baring her teeth, “Get out.”

“That was rude, you piece of trash,” Matcha said, squeezing his head back out the cat flap.

“I’m telling Elizabeth and gang that you’re in cahoots with the new cat!” he yelled as he disappeared from view.

Dust Ball's whiskers trembled with rage. She snapped her head back to Rice Ball, a determined look set on her face.

"I'm warning you," she started, "If I find out that you told anyone about what you just saw, I'm going to vomit all the poop left in the dimension right into your mouth."

A sliver of panic shone in Rice Cake's eyes. She nodded vehemently in response.

"The cats in this cafe are psychos!" she thought in dismay.

Dust Ball removed her paw from the frightened Scottish fold's mouth and patted her head instead.

"From now on, you're with me. I'll take you under my wing," she announced.

Rice Cake's first reaction was to refuse profusely. However, the sight of Dust Ball's open mouth and the lethal smell emitting from it stopped her from doing that.

"I got it," she said, nodding her head.

Quite a bit of internal monologue had taken place before she could come to that decision. "I have to fake subservience for now. This monster is too powerful. If I want to one day bring suffering to mankind, I have to first protect myself. I'll have to let go of my pride."

Dust Ball narrowed her eyes at Rice Cake, sizing her up.

"Good. I need you to go outside and be my lookout. Don't let anyone come in until after I'm done," she instructed.

Since Rice Cake had already caught her in the act, she made the perfect watchman.

Obediently, Rice Cake stuck herself in the cat flap, blocking it entirely. Goosebumps ran up and down her body whenever she heard the disgusting belching from behind her.

"Psychos. They're all psychos here," she thought miserably.

*

Zhao Yao was absorbed in another round of PlayerUnknown's Battlegrounds when he felt something furry squirm onto his lap. He glanced down to find Rice Cake curled in a tight ball, pressing against his abdomen.

The cat was crying on the inside.

"This is madness! The cats in this cafe are insane! I'm safer in this human's arms," she thought.

Zhao Yao took another curious look at her before getting sucked into the game again. He was, however, soon distracted by his ringing phone. The caller's name flashing on his screen made him feel slightly anxious.

"Hello?"

"Okay."

"Yep."

"Yes, I understand."

"I'll be home next week."

He heaved a sigh of relief after hanging up.

"Damn, I can't believe I forgot about this."

He had promised to visit his family this month. However, he was so preoccupied with dealing with Ho Hao Cang and the earthquake cat that he completely forgot about it. By now, the month was drawing to a close. His mom called him to remind him to come home.

Zhao Yao had no idea how he was going to explain his newfound wealth to his parents and sister. He wanted to share some of his money with them, but that would no doubt raise the difficult question of how he struck it rich in the first place,

“I’ll think about it after this match.”

Rice Cake’s furry ears were twitching to the beat of the gunshots from Zhao Yao’s game.

Curious, she stood on tiptoes and straightened her body, both paws placed on the edge of the table to keep her balanced. She stared at his laptop screen, transfixed.

As she watched Zhao Yao’s avatar make a bloody mess of a woman with a shotgun, her eyes shone.

All the mobile games, videos, and animations that Zhao Yao had shown her before did not interest her. Rice Cake had gone through real hardships. Those things paled in comparison to the realities of the harsh world.

But this was different.

Watching Zhao Yao kill his way through the game was a revelation. The myriad of weapons, the bloodshed, and the explosions were a jolt to Rice Cake’s system. She could not look away.

As a new round began, Rice Cake watched in frustration as Zhao Yao’s naked avatar adopted a defensive mode of playing. He focused on scavenging for items across the room and ran when he saw other people.

“Why are you running away?!” she exclaimed, “Kill, kill, kill!”

“You know nothing, Rice Cake,” Zhao Yao said, patting the agitated cat on the head, “To succeed, you have to play the long game. Hiding today gives me a chance of winning tomorrow. It gives me the chance to be that final survivor. I don’t even have a weapon. If I strike now, it’s the end.”

Rice Cake listened attentively to Zhao Yao’s lecture. She did not grow angry or defensive. Instead, her eyes flashed with understanding and agreement.

“That’s right. There’s no point in fighting when I’m not confident of winning. Survival is key. Not pride or glory,” she thought to herself, “It’s the same for me. I’m at this cafe to survive. I’ll grit my teeth and lie low today for that one chance at victory tomorrow.”

Chapter 177: The Poop Cleaner and the Disconnected

Zhao Yao’s avatar crouched behind the door, biding his time. The moment an opponent entered the room, he unleashed a fury of bullets that hit the unwitting enemy, whom would crumple to the ground.

Zhao Yao did not finish him off immediately. He switched on his mic and asked, “Hey asshole, do you still like chasing me now?”

“Hey, bro, chill out. I’m sorry, okay? Let me go, please,” the opponent responded.

“Sure, as long as you call me daddy,” Zhao Yao chuckled.

“Oh, go to hell.”

That prompted Zhao Yao to pull the trigger and kill him.

Rice Cake, who had been observing the entire exchange unblinkingly, was bursting with excitement because she could hear the pain in the enemy’s words.

As Zhao Yao snooped through the dead opponent’s weapons and items, a rapid succession of bullets pierced his body. He fell to the floor and tried climbing away.

“You think you can get away with killing my teammate, boy?” his attacker taunted.

“Bro, chill. We’re on the same side,” Zhao Yao said, echoing his victim’s words.

“There’s no “we”. Call me God and I might spare you.”

“F**k you. Why don’t you kill me if you have the balls to do so.”

This resulted in a terribly violent end for Zhao Yao’s character. He was beaten to death with bare fists.

“C’mon, guys! Get your asses here and kill this son of a bitch. I need revenge!” Zhao Yao yelled into the microphone.

His angry outburst brought a smile to Rice Cake’s face.

“This is it,” she said, “This is how I make the humans suffer. I turn them against each other.”

Her eyes were transfixed on the screen, thoughts running through her head.

“This is most interesting. I shall observe your ugly nature, humans, and use it as part of your downfall,” she thought.

She spent the rest of the day studying each and every round of PlayerUnknown’s Battleground Zhao Yao played. Every time he killed an opponent or mocked them, she felt a perverse surge of happiness.

But when she saw Zhao Yao getting killed, well, she felt nothing short of unadulterated joy.

While she watched the screen, the rest of the supercats were watching her.

“What the heck? She’s been in Zhao Yao’s arms for far too long! Even I don’t stick to him like that!” Matcha said bitterly.

He turned to Roly Poly. “What do you think, Roly P?”

The fat cat was sprawled across a table, drooling and fast asleep. Being kept up all night by Rice Cake’s snoring took a toll on him.

“Trash,” Matcha muttered, turning to Elizabeth and Dust Ball instead, “What do you guys think?”

Elizabeth blinked a few times before letting out a yawn. She did not sleep well either.

She did not have the mental and emotional capacity to think about Rice Cake. She just wanted to know when Zhao Yao will finally let her know the new wifi password. Everything else was secondary.

“I should be able to connect to the cafe’s wifi still,” she pondered, “It’s just about finding the right time to try it...”

Dust Ball did not care about what Matcha said either. All she could think about as she lay on a table was catmint.

“I’ve cleaned up the toilets, Zhao Yao. When can I get the new batch?” she asked him telepathically.

Zhao Yao cracked a smile as he continued his match.

“Dusty Girl,” he started, “As long as you clean up after them every day, I’ll give you a bag of high-quality catmint every day in return. What say you?”

“Every day?! That wasn’t the deal! You lied! You’re not trustworthy!” Dust Ball cried.

Zhao Yao chuckled darkly.

“Dusty, you’re too young and too naive. No one is trustworthy in this cruel world,” he said with an air of experience, “But think about it. My offer works to your advantage. Receiving one big lump sump shipment won’t last as long as daily packs of catmint. Work hard and your supply will never run out.”

When Dust Ball shot him a suspicious look, he smiled brightly and rubbed the back of her head.

“I’m sure you don’t want to ever experience the pain of living without catmint again, do you?”

Involuntary tremors ran down her spine.

Having received no reply, Matcha tried provoking the cats into eliciting some form of reaction.

“Hey, trash collector, aren’t you on the same side as that fake Scottish fold?”

Dust Ball paused his conversation with Zhao Yao to cast Matcha a death glare. “Shut your trap, peasant.”

Matcha responded by gasping, then dramatically pressing his white paws on his chest. He folded his ears flatly against the top of his head.

“Who are you calling a peasant? Me?” he asked with mock exasperation and disbelief.

“So, what do you say, Dusty?” Zhao Yao asked, bringing his attention back to their discussion.

“Would you rather journey down the path to glory or continue being like any of these other cats? Work for me and I’ll guarantee that you’ll always have a bag of catmint at hand.”

“A pack a day? That’s five packs in five days,” she stretched out one paw, then the other, “And 10 packs in 10 days!”

She continued counting even though the number had exceeded what she could represent with her paws.

“I’ll do it!” she concluded.

The rest of the day passed quietly.

Now that Rice Cake’s condition had improved, she did not sleep excessively or snore loudly. She was perched on Zhao Yao’s lap, watching his every move in the game. She would dance joyfully when something exciting happened.

After the Princess Qian incident, Matcha was no longer burdened by affairs of the heart. He could wholeheartedly focus on Mobile Legends again.

Roly Poly continued to eat ravenously and Dust Ball began to work hard at clearing the poop stored in his extradimensional belly.

As for Elizabeth, well, things were not going quite as smoothly. Today marked the second day of her internet disconnection.

It turned out that she underestimated Zhao Yao's pettiness. He had changed the cafe's wifi password as well, much to her chagrin.

"Grr!" Elizabeth hissed, snapping her jaw at the customer in front of her.

Yan Xiao Qing jumped and took a quick step back.

"What's wrong with Elizabeth?" she asked, "Why is she so scary today?"

Elizabeth had always been the most gentle and affectionate cat. Even when Xiao Qing got too carried away and hugged her with too much force, she would just pat her politely to ask for some space. She would never scratch, bite, or hiss at someone.

"What's going on?" Coco Sun asked, brows furrowed.

She had donned a kimono today.

"Elizabeth is always obedient. If she's acting like this, she could be ill."

As the cafe's most frequent customer, Coco had learned a lot about cats and their behavior during her time here. She knew that well-behaved cats that suddenly became aggressive were probably not feeling well.

She called for Baiquan, "Is Elizabeth sick? She's not quite herself today."

Baiquan hurried over to the girls. His first response was to reach out to Elizabeth and scratch her head to soothe her, but she turned to bite his fingers immediately.

Elizabeth did not loosen her bite, but he remained unfazed. Having worked in the cafe for a while, he had been bitten countless times before.

He had also developed an approach for handling such situations.

As long as the attacking cat did not mean to cause bodily harm, it was best not to move. Struggling would only worsen the damage done by their sharp teeth.

Baiquan knew that in this case, all he needed to do was to communicate with his eyes that the cat should let go.

Chapter 178: Internet Addiction Versus Loyalty

Baiquan's theory was proven right.

After their stare-down, Elizabeth eventually released his finger. Shallow bite marks could be seen on his skin, but there was no trace of blood.

The ragdoll cat looked at him guiltily.

"It's alright, Elizabeth. Just don't go biting other people," he cooed, patting the top of her head, "Are you unwell?"

Baiquan asked because he knew that she was able to understand his words.

Elizabeth shook her head discreetly, then cast a dirty look in Zhao Yao's direction.

"Zhao Yao, I am going to literally die if you don't give me the wifi password!" she yelled at him through their shared consciousness.

"You, my dear, seem to be suffering from internet addiction. It stops right now," he responded.

This caused Elizabeth to collapse on the ground, her eyes filled with nothing but despair.

It had been two long days since the password was changed. The first few hours were perfectly fine because she could watch the episodes that she had downloaded to her phone.

Everything went downhill from there.

Minutes felt like hours and hours felt like days. Anguish had settled in her heart. Elizabeth found herself lifeless and lethargic. She had lost interest in things that once made her happy, like her favorite cat food. She had even stopped grooming herself and going to the bathroom.

“Bossman, has Elizabeth fallen sick?” Coco shouted across the cafe.

“She’s fine. It’s just a bit of indigestion. She just needs rest,” Zhao Yao replied in a tone that was devoid of the worry in Coco’s voice.

Matcha had joined in the commotion. He appeared next to Elizabeth and started pawing at her back.

Bright red hearts practically shone from Coco’s eyes when she saw this. “Oh, how cute! He’s worried about you too, my darling Elizabeth.”

“Aww, this is so adorable!” Xiao Qing chimed in, stroking Matcha’s body, “This Scottish fold is a bit of an oddball, but he cares about his sister. Such a sweet thing.”

As Matcha enjoyed the affection that the two girls were giving him, he shot Elizabeth a gleeful look.

“Lizzie, do you want to know the wifi password?” he asked in a sing-song voice.

Elizabeth returned his smile with an icy expression. She knew that there was no way this idiot would be nice to her if he was not getting anything in return. He must be up to something.

“Call me oppa and I’ll tell you,” Matcha added, giving credence to her suspicions.

“Leave,” Elizabeth commanded as her eyes glowed red.

Matcha’s body became stiff as a board before he lost control of it. Elizabeth had compelled his body to do a high jump and leap away.

His mind, however, was still very much under his jurisdiction.

“Did you really think you could control me? I can freeze time!” he chuckled.

In the next moment, he had used his power and stopped time for the rest of the world. While everyone was motionless, he alone fell to the floor with a loud thud.

“Ow, ow, ow. That hurts,” Matcha complained, twisting his body to get back on his feet, “I forgot that time doesn’t stop for me. Oh s**t, I need to get back in the air, if not...”

When time resumed, Elizabeth saw him fall from mid-air to the floor in a flash.

“As I said, I’m unbeatable,” he said, slightly out of breath.

He turned around to walk, or rather, limp away.

Coco Sun’s eyes were glued to him. She was gaping.

“That cat fell impossibly quickly, didn’t it?” she wondered aloud.

“Yeah, I blinked and he was already on the floor,” Xiao Qing agreed.

“Well,” Baiquan reasoned, “This is absolutely normal because cats tend to jump from great heights at great speeds. It’s how they are built.”

Elizabeth was not at all interested in their conversation. She had turned her head in Zhao Yao’s direction again, fuming.

“Zhao Yao! What must I do to get the wifi password?”

“Don’t get mad, Elizabeth. I’m cutting you off for just one week. Treat this as a form of mental training,” he responded, “Internet addiction is that little devil on your shoulder. If you want to beat him, you need courage and perseverance. If you can stay away from the internet for a week, you would gain the kind of determination that would make your powers invincible.”

“But I can’t beat him!” Elizabeth exclaimed, “I can feel a woman’s voice in my ear repeating the same words – get wifi, get wifi, get wifi.”

“This just proves how severe your addition is. You cannot let it control you, Elizabeth. You can live perfectly well without wifi!” Zhao Yao said bracingly.

She flopped on her back lifelessly, staring up at the ceiling.

“I can’t. All I see are hundreds of phone screens, each one showing a different award-winning drama series.”

“Think about it Elizabeth. For thousands of years, cats have lived fulfilling, happy lives without wifi. Why can’t you do the same? Without the internet, you can pursue other hobbies. You can try a teaser wand, or chase a fake mouse, or enjoy a scratching post. You can even play hide and seek with Mango and the rest.”

“That is not helping. You’ve painted for me a life that I would detest. It would be a life without meaning. I would never want to wallow in ignorance and stupidity like Mango.”

Zhao Yao pursed his lips. Elizabeth usually seemed indifferent and haughty, as if everything was beneath her. He would never expect that she needed the internet so much.

His train of thought was suddenly derailed by a quick succession of updates in his Book.

It made him jump to his feet instantly.

“Everything okay?” Shi Yu asked, peering over.

“It’s fine! Everything’s fine!” he replied hysterically.

He threw his mouse on the table and marched towards Elizabeth.

Elizabeth’s Loyalty – 10

Elizabeth’s Loyalty – 10

Elizabeth’s Loyalty – 10

“Oh my god!” Zhao Yao screamed internally, clutching his head with both hands.

He felt like he was going insane. Elizabeth’s loyalty was free-falling at an exponential rate. If this kept going, it would be falling into negative levels soon. What would happen then?

“Jesus, all I did was cut off your internet connection! Did I say something wrong just now? This is complete madness.”

He used the power of illusion to conceal both himself and Elizabeth from the eyes of everyone else in the cafe. To the customers, Elizabeth was still lying on the table while he was still playing his game.

Elizabeth’s Loyalty – 10

Elizabeth’s Loyalty – 10

Zhao Yao scooped Elizabeth into his arms.

“Alright, alright, I’ll tell you the password right now, okay?”

In the short time that it took for him to walk to her, 50 loyalty points had already been deducted. This made it very clear that Zhao Yao was not as important to her as wife was.

“Really?” Elizabeth asked, looking up at him with bright eyes, “You’ll let me go online?”

“Yes, yes, yes. The password is ‘Zhao Yao is the handsomest man in all the land’. Use capital letters for my name.”

Elizabeth’s Loyalty – 1

“How has my password offended her?!” Zhao Yao thought to himself, feeling slightly hurt.

“My phone! Where is my phone?!” Elizabeth asked, looking around frantically.

The despair and lifelessness that bogged her down had disappeared.

“Here,” Zhao Yao said, passing the phone to her.

Elizabeth grabbed it instantly and started typing in the wifi password rapidly. When she managed to once again be connected to the internet, Zhao Yao’s Book started experiencing changes again.

Elizabeth’s Loyalty + 1

Elizabeth’s Loyalty + 1

Elizabeth’s Loyalty + 1

“I guess your real owner is the wifi, not me,” Zhao Yao grumbled to himself.

“Don’t play with your phone when you’re at work, okay? Wait till the cafe closes,” he said to Elizabeth.

“I beg your pardon?” Elizabeth glared.

Elizabeth’s Loyalty – 20

“Oh, fine! Fine, fine fine. You’re the boss here, you do your thing,” he said, exasperated.

This brought a smile to Elizabeth’s face. She clicked on a new episode of Downton Abbey.

Her loyalty towards Zhao Yao continued to grow as she watched the show, which was a relief.

“I doubt she’ll work at all today. I’ll just continue to hide her absence with the illusion,” Zhao Yao thought to himself as he settled back into his usual seat.

Elizabeth was gnashing her teeth at the screen as the plot thickened.

“Oh, am I outraged! O’Brien is a vicious woman who should die the most horrible death! Why is she still alive?!”

Elizabeth’s Loyalty – 1

“?”

Zhao Yao, who was in the middle of a new match, looked at Elizabeth incredulously.

“How are O’Brien’s failings my fault? What’s wrong with this loyalty point system? It doesn’t make any sense.”

Chapter 179: An Encounter Amid Resistance

Sun Meng ambled down an alley, the three ragdoll cats trailing behind her. They were jumping and weaving around each other, seemingly in good spirits.

Her brows furrowed when she took another look at the map displayed on her phone.

“Hmm, this cafe is more elusive than I thought. My beloved Lizzie, where on earth could you be?” she thought.

Caesar observed her with interest.

“Have you noticed yet?” he asked his companions as he licked his nose.

“Noticed what?” Diana responded.

“That Sun Meng is terrible with directions. She’s lost. We’re never going to be able to find our destination,” Catherine replied through gritted teeth.

“We’ve been walking forever,” Caesar added, raising his paws so he could look at the pads beneath them, “My pink and beautiful soles are now black and sooty. I can’t even bring myself to lick them clean. If we keep going, I’m going to get blisters soon.”

As the ragdoll family continued lamenting their fate, a dozen men dressed in black suddenly appeared. They swiftly blocked both ends of the narrow alley that they were in, leaving them trapped.

The groove between Sun Meng’s eyebrows deepened as she stared down the apostle officers standing in their way.

“That was fast. I guess you found me,” she sighed.

“Sun Meng, I think you’ve had quite enough fun. It’s time to go,” one of the officers said.

“We can’t just bring her back to the station. She has a lot to answer for. She’s wrecked havoc in our city,” another officer chimed in, shaking his head.

The men did not bring her discomfort or fear. Sun Meng remained perfectly composed, her face expressionless.

Quietly, she said, “Zhuangzi never knew if he dreamt he was a butterfly or if he was a butterfly dreaming of being a man. You know this story. It’s impossible to tell dreams and reality apart. So how can you believe things you’ve never seen or heard for yourselves to be real?”

These words instantly heightened the tension in the alley. A tinge of fear could be seen on the faces of the apostle officers, but they rushed towards the girl, shouting, “Fire!”

The men closed in on Sun Meng and the ragdoll cats, each firing his tranquilizer gun at them.

*

Mere minutes later, Sun Meng emerged from the narrow alley. She was again studying her phone carefully, an inscrutable expression on her face. The three cats followed after her.

It was as if the officers never cornered them at all.

Their path, however, was once again blocked, this time by a middle-aged woman. She chuckled as Sun Meng slowed down.

“You’re good, aren’t you? Really good. Those apostle officers are weaklings, but to fight and win them by yourself is quite the feat. No wonder the authorities are so keen to catch you,” she said.

Sun Meng did not respond. Instead, she narrowed her eyes. This seemed to remove all expressions from the woman’s face. Her face grew slack and her body limp. She had been forced into a dream state.

“Idiot,” Sun Meng muttered, “Caesar, erase her memory.”

Caesar slunk forward, then leaped gracefully across the woman’s shoulder. When his paw touched her head, her memory of what happened in the last 24 hours was gone.

This was how Sun Meng always defeated her opponents. This was how the three cats’ powers worked together.

Catherine, the mother, was able to put people to sleep with one look. This power had a wide reach, but it only induced light sleep in its victims. They would wake up with the smallest of stirs.

This is where Catherine’s daughter, Diana’s, powers came in handy. Like Catherine, she could also unleash her powers just by looking at the subject. Her ability was to drag her victims into a deep

dream state. She could even keep them there forever if she wanted to, leaving them in a permanent vegetative state. This was the fate that befell every person they met in the cat cafes they have been to.

As for Caesar, the father, his power was to destroy memories when he touched a person's head. He could only erase memories from up to 24 hours ago. Anything beyond that was safe from his reach.

The individual powers held by each member of the ragdoll family were impressive on their own. Used together, their impact was nothing short of devastating.

Sun Meng knew this. She also knew that it was crucial for her to keep Caesar's and Catherine's powers a secret from the authorities. She only used them when she was confident that she could leave no trace behind, like now. Without surveillance cameras and with Caesar's power to wipe memories, she would leave no evidence of the true depth of her powers.

This three-step method was how she had been confounding the police. Every officer that laid eyes on her would be put to sleep, then pulled into a deep dream state, before having their memories erased. It created mass confusion. No one could remember how she evaded capture. Worse, nobody could figure out her abilities.

"But it's still not enough," Sun Meng thought to herself, "Catherine, Caesar, and Diana are powerful together, but there's still a missing link."

"With Elizabeth's illusions, I would be able to blur the line that separates dreams from reality. They would never know what hit them. That would be true perfection."

This was Sun Meng's end goal.

She had risked capture to find Elizabeth. She did not even care if the truth behind Catherine's and Caesar's powers was revealed during her search. She needed her. She was the missing piece of the puzzle.

She continued winding down the street, her head swimming, when yet another man appeared to stop her in her tracks.

He chortled, "Ah, I wonder what your powers are. Is it hypnosis? Creating vertigo? Inducing a coma? Whatever it is, you're quite something."

Sun Meng's narrowed her brows again before pulling the same performance on the man, knocking him out in an instant.

This time she charged down the lane, hoping to get out of her as quickly as possible. There was something weird happening here.

Unfortunately, as she made a turn, another obstacle stood in her way. This time, it took the form of a seven year old child who was licking at a lollipop.

"There's no point running, you know. You're not the only person with powers. Just look at me," the child said, chuckling in the same way her previous victims did.

"And what exactly am I looking at?" Sun Meng retorted, brows furrowed again.

She was, however, a tad unsettled. Whoever she was speaking to seemed to be able to possess other people or control their bodies.

The kid smiled, "I don't mean any harm. I'm actually here to invite you to join us."

"Join you? Who are you?"

"The arrival of the supercats have created superpowers that once belonged only to our imaginations. Of course, some powers are better than others. Most of them are useless and unable to right this corrupt world. Apostles who own these substandard powers have no choice but be controlled by the authorities," the child explained.

"But then, there are apostles like you, who have the power to make a real difference. Why should you bow down and live like any ordinary person?"

"I'm not interested in working with anyone who's too afraid to show his face," Sun Meng retorted coolly.

The child's response surprised her.

“Then I’ll take you to see the real me. How about that?”

She stared at him.

“Count me intrigued.”

The child led Sun Meng deep into the suburbs before finally entering an apartment block one hour later.

Three apostles were sat around the living room.

One of the men stood up when he saw Sun Meng. He felt like the leader of the group even though he looked remarkably ordinary. It felt a little out of place, like having a bit-part actor play the leading role in a movie.

“Welcome!” he said warmly, “This is the best decision you’ll ever make, I promise.”

Chapter 180: Devotion and God

A few days later, Zhao Yao remained seated at his usual spot in the café.

In the far corner of the café, Matcha was using his remaining internet time before the café opened for business.

With his nimble paws, he quickly tapped on the WeChat application and accessed Princess Qian’s contact. He stared at her profile picture solemnly and thought, “I guess I can never forget about this relationship. If devotion is a crime, I guess that just makes me a faithful criminal.”

Roly Poly was behind Matcha as he scrutinized his every action with a look of disdain, “He’s just a dumb cat that thinks using his lower body and not his head.” He looked on with anguish as he saw Princess Qian’s newly posted selfie on WeChat, he lamented, “If not for this devil who broke us up, I would have been in that photo with her.”

Finally, Zhao Yao stood on his feet and started stretching his body. He thought, “Hmph, another week had gone by already. It’s time for me to train the five supercats again.”

With this thought at the back of his head, Zhao Yao entered the cat toilet and disappeared into his extradimensional belly with a swirl.

...

Inside the belly, Gaia was still restrained by the ropes and its mouth was sealed with duct tape. It was lying on the floor like the salted fish in the markets.

However, this did not stop it from communicating with the rest. By using its consciousness, Gaia’s voice erupted in the remaining supercats’ head, “It wasn’t me! I didn’t even make my last wish! Who gave you the rights to tie me up and seal my mouth? I want to eat! I want to watch Attack on Titans! I don’t want to miss the last episode!”

“I don’t care if you are responsible for the incident or not, but God would appear anytime soon, and I want you to keep your mouth shut!” Ares demanded as its face turned crimson.

Suddenly, Ares realized that its vision was enveloped in darkness before it opened its eyes and noticed that it was inside a carriage of a train. It had no idea what had happened.

“Not bad, you are the first cat to wake up among all of them. You have potential,” A black cat sniggered as it waved the pistol in its paws. From the looks of it, the black cat was a police cat.

“Who are you? Where am I at?” Ares was bewildered by its own predicament, “And why is a cat like you wearing human clothes? You are totally different from the rest of us!”

At this moment, the four remaining supercats cat had also started waking up.

“What happened?”

“Is this our new mission?”

“Is it the same as the previous one?”

“Is this black cat our enemy?”

“Stop looking around!” The black police cat pointed to its head and explained, “He must have implanted the memories in all your heads. Try to recall and understand what’s going on.”

A minute of silence passed ...

Ares retorted, “He didn’t implant any sorts of memories in our head! I can’t recall anything at all!”

“This world that you are currently in is the God’s Realm. If you wish to survive, you have to complete the missions that God have assigned you. This is neither a game nor a joke. Everything is real in this world. If you want to live, you have to complete the missions ...”

“In the end, you still have to explain everything to us! There were no memories implanted into our head!” Ares shouted as a vein popped across its neck.

Lucifer was carefully analyzing the entire situation, “This is a new setting that God had created for us. It should be similar to our next mission. We will be able to return once we complete this mission.”

Fūjin nodded its head in agreement, “Hmph, we should talk to this black cat and get a better understanding of our mission. God definitely has his reason for bringing us here.”

The British Shorthair, Rakshasa, nodded its head in unison, “Maybe the objective of our mission would allow us to defeat our enemy and bring us back!”

Just when all the cats were engaging via their consciousness, a loud noise erupted.

Ha!

Gaia had pounced on the black cat and slammed it against the ground. It sat on the black cat’s belly and landed an avalanche of slaps against the black cat’s head.

“God’s Realm?!”

“Complete a mission?!”

“I think you are the enemy for our mission, and I will beat you to a bloody pulp and destroy you!”

The four remaining supercats stared in shock. Terror overtook their faces as they witnessed the scene unfold right before their eyes. When they finally reacted to what had happened, they immediately dashed forward and pulled Gaia away from the black cat.

“Let me go! I’m going to destroy this black cat! I’m going to complete the mission!”

Ares did not dare to make eye contact with the black cat and awkwardly mumbled a few words with its head lowered, “I’m so sorry, but there’s something wrong with this cat.” As Ares spoke, it bent down and retrieved the police cap lying on the floor and returned it to the black cat.

“Thankfully, you’re not injured.”

“Obviously I’m not injured! I am the most senior cat in the entire God’s Realm!” The black police cat wiped the blood off of its mouth and continued, “If I didn’t give this insolent cat a chance, I would have blasted him into pieces when he came charging towards me!” The black cat said as it spun the pistol in its paws.

“Yes, yes! We are so thankful for your benevolence!”

The black cat raised its brows and started touching its nose, “Why do I feel that there’s something wrong with my face?”

Ares stared at its slightly deformed face and shook its head awkwardly, “Nothing! There’s nothing wrong with your face! You look as good as new! There is no problem with your face at all!”

“Alright newcomers, there’s no time for us to waste on all these squabbles. Get ready to alight soon; I heard that this mission is particularly difficult.”

Ares could not help but start sniggering when the black cat turned its body around.

One giant word was printed on the black police cat's back, Enemy.

"This is awkward!"

Ares raised its paws and gave it a slight shake. Immediately, claws as sharp as knives emerged. A vicious aura emanated from Ares's body.

At the next moment, the five supercats had huddled together and launched a barrage of attacks on the black police cat. They finally heaved a sigh of relief when they saw its body slowly dissipate into a stream of white light.

"Hey, I only attacked that cat because I saw the word on its back!" Gaia retorted, "Why did the four of you stop me? Are you guys blind?"

The remaining cats just stared at each other helplessly. Somehow, they felt that this was a token mission with no actual purpose behind it.

The same thing happened again. Their vision was enveloped in darkness. Before they knew it, they were transported back to the container, and Zhao Yao's voice erupted in the space.

"You guys did a brilliant job! After the turmoil that you experience and the numerous obstacles that you overcame, you finally defeated your powerful opponent and had emerged before me."

"Powerful my ass!" Ares was left speechless by Zhao Yao's gibberish, "How is this difficult at all? We haven't even been out for a full minute. Are you doing this just for the sake of creating a weekly mission?"

Lucifer circled the container and commented, "The size of the carriage was roughly the same size as the container."

Zhao Yao tried to disrupt their train of thoughts by his cough. Then, he immediately gave them a large bag of cat food and numerous freshly charged power banks. He declared, "This is your reward!"

Gaia looked on with contempt and asked, "Why is it XXXX brand again? I'm a little sick of this brand. God, can I ..."

Wada!

Bam!

Following the thunderous explosion, Gaia had been thrown into the air and spun 360° before colliding against the steel wall of the container. The collision brought about a loud clank.

Ares slowly rested its paws back on the floor. The air particles were still somewhat distorted because of the remnants from Ares's barrier which it used against Gaia.

Ares glanced at Gaia and saw it lying on the floor with both eyes rolled backward. It was even foaming at its mouth.

Ares nodded its head and commented, "Very good. We are now safe. We can carefully discuss and ask for a proper wish."

Lucifer walked towards Gaia and started sniffing its body. Lucifer hesitated before asking, "Is Gaia going to die?"

"There's no way that Gaia is going to die," Ares replied nonchalantly, "We are cats, and we can even recover from a spinal injury."

"Now, it's finally time for me to make my wish."