

## Am I A God 361

### Chapter 361: Chicken Dinners and a Newcomer

Next, Zhao Yao sought out Red Packet.

He felt that their trip to Chuan Xiao District had helped them bond. He trusted him enough to let him roam freely in the belly. The cat was now flopped on the floor, eyes glued to an anime that lit up his tablet screen.

He immediately tensed when he noticed Zhao Yao approaching.

“Don’t stab me! Don’t stab me!” he cried, scrambling to get onto his feet.

Zhao Yao rolled his eyes. It seemed like Red Packet’s impression of him was very much shaped by his performance at Chuan Xiao.

He patiently explained what really happened to the frightened cat, whom gradually calmed down. Zhao Yao tentatively reached out to stroke his back.

“Hey,” he started, “I still don’t know what your power actually is.”

Red Packet eyed the human suspiciously.

“Good luck, I guess. I seem to be able to make money more easily from anything I do.”

“Make money more easily from anything you do?” Zhao Yao repeated, his eyes lighting up like a jackpot machine.

He always knew that this fortune cat could roll in cash, but now he understood how it worked.

He had a plan.

“Red Packet, I run a cat cafe. Do you want to try working there?” he asked.

“Cat cafe?” he shook his head profusely, “That would mean selling my body. I’m not ruining my good name by doing – .”

He swallowed the rest of his sentence when he noticed the murderous look on Zhao Yao’s face.

“That’s utter bull,” he said firmly, “We operate a clean, family-friendly business where cats and people can interact and form friendships. Sell your body? What an insult. Get ready to start work tomorrow.”

“...”

Zhao Yao did not wait for a response. He spun on his heel and left the belly.

He made his way home, where he started checking off the usual list of daily tasks.

When night rolled around, Baiquan brought the troupe of supercats to the house.

Zhao Yao looked up when the front door swung open. The first thing he saw was Matcha’s gloomy expression as he shuffled in.

When the ginger cat passed the food bowls, he swatted them forcefully, sending them flying. He let out a hmpf, then leapt onto the massage chair. He then started punching the backrest manically.

Zhao Yao watched this with furrowed brows.

“What’s up with him?” he asked Baiquan.

Baiquan laughed good-naturedly, “According to Elizabeth, the power his beloved Lu Ban used to pack has been weakened. He’s lost every match he played today.”

“Playing on the job again, has he?” Zhao Yao shook his head at the angry cat, “I’ll handle this. Thanks for running the cafe today, Baiquan. Everything okay with Old Man Zhuang?”

Baiquan lifted his hand, his index finger and thumb meeting in an “OK” sign.

“All went well. Elizabeth and I worked together to serve him.”

The next person to enter the house was Hanako, who had Rice Cake in her arms. The Scottish Fold sprung from her and darted straight for the study table. She switched on the laptop, then launched her favorite game, all with an eager expression on her face.

Hanako had stopped in her tracks. She was staring at Lightning with widened eyes. He was still cleaning the floor diligently.

“Why is Lightning mopping? Zhao Yao, why are you bullying the poor thing?” she demanded.

“Me? Bully him?” Zhao Yao said incredulously.

He recounted in vivid detail what Lightning had done. As she listened, Hanako’s expression morphed from indignation to disgust.

“Lightning!” she shouted, glaring at the cat.

He flopped onto his belly in fear, ears flattened against his head.

As Hanako lectured the cat, Zhao Yao made his way to the massage chair.

He patted the top of Matcha’s head.

“What’s wrong? Are you angry about something?”

“Mmm.”

Matcha turned away from him, so Zhao Yao started gently scratching the side of his neck. He tried to evade his touch, but eventually succumbed to the enjoyable contact.

“I heard Lu Ban has been weakened?” Zhao Yao mentioned casually.

That was the trigger that got Matcha to finally speak.

“How could they do that?! Don’t they not know that all the top players use Lu Ban? And they weakened him? Have they gone mad?”

Zhao Yao tried to console the livid cat. Rice Cake, whom was already immersed in a match of PUBG, spoke up.

“Matcha, why don’t you play PlayerUnknown Battleground with me?” she suggested.

“PlayerUnknown Battleground?” Matcha asked.

“Yeah. Aren’t you already the number one in King’s Glory? You’ll get the hang of PUBG in no time,” she responded, “Plus, I found cheats we can use. We’ll be unbeatable together.”

“Number one?” Matcha was momentarily stunned, but he regained composure quickly, “Yeah, we’ll be unbeatable.”

“Cheats?” Zhao Yao was stunned as well, “Yeah, you guys will make an unbeatable team.”

It seemed like Rice Cake was really taking the game seriously.

“Exactly. We’ll be great. You should play with me. PUBG is the hottest thing right now. We can even live stream our matches. One day, we’ll climb right to the top and be one of those top streamers that earns millions a year,” she concluded.

“Millions a year?” Elizabeth piped in.

She had been agonizing over her complete lack of popularity on Weibo.

So far, she had received a grand total of one like. She had 12 followers, of which two were her own secondary accounts and the remaining 10 belonged to promoters that were trying to sell her stuff.

It was miserable.

Elizabeth got onto her feet.

“How do I play PUBG?” she asked.

Rice Cake was more than happy to teach her. The two cats wasted no time to begin a discussion on the game.

Matcha did not join in.

He rubbed his face, then let out a yawn.

“Count me out. I still prefer King’s Glory. Also, I don’t have a laptop. I can’t play,” he said simply.

His true reason for deferring was more complicated than that.

“I can’t play! What if I lose to Rice Cake? She’ll never believe that I’m number one at anything!” he thought.

Elizabeth turned to Zhao Yao.

“We got quite a bit of money from Chuan Xiao, didn’t we? Can’t we use some of that to buy new laptops?”

Matcha laughed to himself.

“How naive, my dear Elizabeth. No one is stingier than Zhao Yao. He would never buy you a laptop,” he mused.

“Sure!” Zhao Yao agreed instantly.

There were millions’ worth of cold, hard cash lying in a bag somewhere in the belly. Buying a few laptops would not put a dent to it.

“I’ll buy five. It’s time for me to get a new one anyway.”

Matcha gawked at Zhao Yao, then clamped his jaw down onto his owner’s arm.

“Imposter!”

For the next few days, Zhao Yao resumed his usual lifestyle. The one difference he had made was to cater time to watch the Sphynx train.

The atmosphere in the house had changed. At night, the vicious smacking of keyboards echoed through the halls, coupled with feverish meows and yelps.

Rice Cake, Elizabeth, Matcha, and an unwitting Roly Poly, had formed a clan and embarked on their PUBG journey together.

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Two weeks later, at Jiangmen City International Airport.

A handsome, young man made his way down the steps of an airport. He had on samurai armor.

He looked up at the sky, then let out a derisive snort.

“Well, China, I hope you do not disappoint.”

Chapter 362: Shadowing and Training

The moment he walked into the arrival hall, a man raised a welcome card and hurried towards him.

He bowed deeply. "Hello, you must be Lord Ishida."

Ishida was the last disciple of Yagyu Kazuhiko, Japan's only remaining blademaster. Yagyu was also known as the God of Sword Art.

He had always commanded immense respect and power, but that reached a whole new level after the awakening.

The appearance of supercats changed things. Their superpowers made Yagyu more powerful than anyone could have imagined.

Young boys and men everywhere fought to be taken under his wing. The apostles that were after Hanako had links to him as well.

Like them, Ishida had come to China for her.

Ishida nodded curtly at the man. "Where is he?"

"We've located his whereabouts, but I'm afraid there are...complications. We can't just go up to him and start a fight."

"Why not?"

Ishida's perfectly shaped eyebrows were furrowed. He kept his piercing eyes firmly on the man, whom tried to shy away from his resolute stare.

"Because we believe you're up to something."

Lin Chen was the person who had spoken. He strolled up to Ishida with an impish grin on his face.

“Hello there, Ishida. Welcome to China. Allow me to accompany you as you traverse through our beautiful country,” he said.

Ishida’s eyes narrowed. “Who are you?”

Lin Chen met his hostility with a smile.

“I’m an apostle officer. My name is Lin Chen,” he responded easily, flashing his ID, “It’s very nice to meet you.”

Ishida glowered at him. “Is this how the Chinese authorities treat all their foreign friends?”

Lin Chen chuckled. “C’mon, let’s drop the pretense. You’re not friend of ours. We know all about the trouble you’ve been stirring back home.”

This time, when he looked at Ishida, there was a flicker of menace.

“What you’ve done in Japan is none of our business, but you’re in China now. If you cause any kind of trouble here, it’s my business. I will break more than just that handsome face.”

It was Ishida’s turn to smile. It did not reach his eyes at all.

“Don’t worry, my friend. I’ll give you a chance to spar with me before I leave. Till then.”

With that, he spun on his heel and walked away. The man who welcomed him trailed behind.

Lin Chen remained where he was as he watched their retreating figures. A plump man hurried to him.

“Obnoxious, isn’t he?”

“He’s obnoxious because he’s confident,” Lin Chen said, scratching his chin thoughtfully, “He’s self-made. He started with nothing, but fought his way to become Yagyu’s disciple and climbed all



the way to the top of that Japanese gang. They call him Raijin – God of Thunder. We should not underestimate him.”

“You know how much the Japanese love little nicknames like that. Do we really have to shadow his every move?”

“Yes, for the next 24 hours at least. We’ll take turns. He is not leaving our sight,” Lin Chen said firmly.

It was apparent that he was not kidding.

“They’re still tailing us. What should we do?” the man asked, peering anxiously into the rearview mirror.

Ishida was unperturbed. “Ignore them. Let’s focus on our target. Do you have his files?”

The man handed him a folder. In it was photo after photo of Hanako. There were shots of her entering and leaving the cafe, attending to customers, and caring for the cats.

“Cat cafe, huh? Does it belong to an apostle?” Ishida asked.

“Yes. The owner of the cafe is an apostle. He’s taken Hanako under his wing. I believe he was the one who defeated Sato and the rest.”

Sato was one of Yagyu’s disciples as well. He was the one who got caught breaking into Zhao Yao’s house.

After the incident, he was arrested by Lin Chen. His capture alerted Inspector Ho to the existence of the Japanese terror group.

The names of notable apostles in the group were added to the country’s list of potential threats. The Inspector would be alerted if any of them entered China. That was how Lin Chen knew of Ishida’s arrival.

Ishida continued browsing through the stack of photos. Among them were pictures of Zhao Yao and Baiquan.

“So, what’s this complication you mentioned? Is this apostle particularly powerful?” he asked.

The man was quick to respond.

“Of course he’s no match for you, Lord Ishida,” he flattered, “However, he seems to have some kind of healing abilities. Retired government officers, high-ranking ones no less, visit the cafe to be treated every day. If we attack, the authorities will know. What’s more...”

He turned to look out the window. A black car was now driving by their side, matching their speed. Lin Chen waved cheerfully from inside.

There was no need for him to complete his sentence. Lin Chen’s presence made things very clear. With the government watching his every step, it would be impossible to strike.

There was a deep crease between Ishida’s brows. “If that’s the case...”

He was confident that he could beat any apostle at all. However, he knew that attacking the retirees’ doctor would be challenging the authorities openly. That would not end well.

The car descended into silence as Ishida was consumed by his thoughts.

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At the cat cafe.

Elizabeth, Rice Cake, Roly Poly, and Matcha were seated in a circle, as if they were having a meeting.

Elizabeth cleared her throat.

“As you all know, we have not been performing well for the past few days. For every 10 rounds we played, we only made it to the top 10 for one round. If we keep this up, we’ll never have our chicken dinner.”

Winner winner chicken dinner.

That was the message that would be sprawled on the screen of the winner of a PUBG match.

Elizabeth started fuming when she saw the lackluster expression on Matcha’s face.

“Special mention goes to you, Matcha!” she scolded, “Your aiming sucks! I don’t understand how you got punched to death with someone’s bare fists when you had a freaking rifle! Do you want to win or not?”

She then turned to Rice Cake, whom was dozing off.

“And you, Rice Cake!”

The sleepy cat was jolted awake. She widened her eyes and blinked slowly. “Me?”

“You attack anyone and everyone you see! And you always head to the most crowded spots first! Those are the most dangerous! Can you please just control yourself? You almost always die instantly. We’re pretty much always a three-cat team.”

Rice Cake was not happy about such biting criticism.

“How can I get our chicken dinner if I don’t kill our opponents?” she retorted.

Matcha started defending himself as well.

“I told you! My internet connection got cut! I couldn’t move for at least two seconds. If that hadn’t happened, I would have shot him and killed him,” he argued.

Elizabeth was shaking her head out of frustration. The past fortnight had been trying. Her teammates were nothing but burdens and it felt like she had to carry the entire team on her back. She could feel her blood pressure reach new heights with each day.

There was another spike in her levels when she spotted Roly Poly using his phone.

“Roly Poly! How many times must I repeat myself? No phones during meetings!” she yelled.

The fat cat raised his head and smiled at her apologetically.

“I’m sorry. I’ll stop,” he said.

The word “bitch” flashed on his screen before he shut it.

Elizabeth let out a dramatic sigh as she looked from one teammate to another.

“This can’t continue. If we keep playing like this, we’ll never win a match, much less start a career in live-streaming.”

She continued, “I’ve created a chicken dinner training schedule. From today, each of us will stick to that schedule and train! Every day!”

## Chapter 363: Train and Level Up

“We will begin our new training regime today. We’ll wake at 5 am to practise for two hours. This will ensure that we can still leave for work at 7 am. At 8 am, once we’ve settled down, we’ll do readings together and have a sharing session on what we’ve learnt.”

“Readings?” Matcha repeated incredulously.

“I’ve taken the liberty of consolidating articles on PUBG strategies. They’re written by the best players in the world. I’ve named this collection the Chicken Dinner Recipes.”

With that, Elizabeth whipped out her phone and sent her carefully curated folder to everyone.

Matcha flipped through the pages at top speed, hardly reading any of it. He was alarmed by the sheer volume of content.

“When did you put this together?” he asked.

“While you guys were sleeping,” she replied simply, “Anyway, back to our schedule. While we work in the afternoons, you should also reflect on your performance the night before. I expect a 100-word self-evaluation from each of you.”

She took a breath before continuing. “We’ll be home around 7 pm. The first thing we’ll do is hold a stand-up meeting. We’ll share our self-evaluations and give each other pointers on how to improve.”

“At 8 pm, we’ll split into two-cat teams to run a training simulation. The losing team will have to lick clean the winning team’s fur.”

Rice Cake’s face contorted with disgust.

“We begin actual matches at 9 pm. We’ll end the day by watching replays of top players. That would be at 1 am.”

“Erm,” Roly Poly piped in nervously, raising his paw, “Don’t we have to wake at 5 am? If we start watching the replays at 1 am, I don’t think we’ll be getting much sleep...”

Elizabeth slammed the table angrily.

“Then sleep when you’re in the customers’ arms! Don’t you understand that we don’t have time left? The PUBG stream scene is becoming saturated. If we don’t raise our standards now, we’ll never be signed to any of the platforms and we’ll never make it big!”

Roly Poly nodded, but the displeasure was plain on his face. Rice Cake and Matcha had no objections. They were night owls anyway, so the late nights were not a problem. They were just a little uncomfortable by how intense the schedule was.

Zhao Yao was observing the meeting from his usual seat with an amused smile. Most of his attention was expended on the extradimensional belly, where the Sphynx was exercising his hairless butt off.

It was clear that the triple gravitational pull was no longer an impediment for him. He was darting around the cage like a shadow, so swiftly that he left gusts of wind in his wake.

“Not bad,” Zhao Yao nodded, pleased with the progress.

He made his way to the cat.

“How’s it going?” he started, “Have you gotten used to the extra three times of pressure?”

“Yeah,” the Sphynx said casually, “It’s nothing. Give me more.”

Zhao Yao grinned. This was going exactly as planned. He increased the additional weight from three to four times.

The Sphynx’s knees buckled slightly from the extra weight, but he straightened in a moment. He moved about slowly at first, then easily when he got used to it. After a few minutes, he could even start jumping.

“You’re a determined one, aren’t you?” Zhao Yao commented.

Back at the cafe, a group of college girls started squealing when they noticed Elizabeth and gang.

“Aww, that’s the cutest thing I’ve ever seen!”

“Lizzie, are you guys holding a little meeting?”

Coco Sun, who was wearing a traditional hanfu today, scooped Elizabeth into her arms and buried her face in her thick fur.

The rest of the girls reached out for the other cats, all smiling from ear to ear.

“That’s all for today,” Elizabeth told her teammates telepathically, “Let’s work.”

Roly Poly let out a long sigh, “Finally.”

Matcha yawned, a look of boredom settled on his face.

As the cats started relaxing from Elizabeth’s tedious briefing, Zhao Yao tensed.

“Elizabeth, cover me,” he said, then promptly disappeared into the extradimensional belly.

Something had happened.

There was an update to the Book.

Dust Ball had suddenly leveled up. Twice.

Her original Level 6 was now at Level 8 (0 / 50,000), surpassing Matcha. She had become the supercat with the highest level.

“What’s going on? Two levels at once?” Zhao Yao wondered urgently, “Jesus Christ, it must be the Royal Catmint.”

He headed straight for the catmint’s secret location.

Sure enough, Dust Ball was there, the bag of Royal Catmint dangling from her mouth.

“Zhao...Zhao Yao?” she uttered.

She was too shocked by his sudden appearance to conceal the crime she had committed.

Zhao Yao snatched the bag from her.

It had been emptied.

“Huh, so it is the catmint. I thought it could level up the consumer once, not twice,” he wondered aloud.

Something clicked into place in his mind.

“It must be the Light of Creation,” he said, looking up.

The Light was to the extradimensional belly what the sun was to the earth. It illuminated the space and helped the plants and vegetables planted in it to flourish. Anything grown here was imbued with special properties. That was why they could be used to make legendary cat food, which came with 100 experience points upon consumption.

“Even the Royal Catmint was fortified after being under the Light of Creation,” Zhao Yao sighed, shaking the empty bag.

The remaining flakes were rustled against the plastic quietly.

“Wait, there’s a bit more.”

Zhao Yao barged into the cafe and fed the remnants to Matcha and the other cats.

It might be a minute amount, but it still tasted excellent. Delicious as it might be, it did not bring about any level-ups or increases in experience points.

He returned to the belly, thoroughly disappointed.

Dust Ball curled into a literal ball when she spotted Zhao Yao.

“Dust Ball, didn’t I ask you to guard the catmint? How could you end up eating it yourself?” he scolded.



She replied quietly, “You won’t believe this, but the bag was already opened when I was here.”

“Come on, get up,” Zhao Yao said through gritted teeth, “Go clean the cafe. I want it to be spotless!”

Dust Ball heaved a sigh of relief and scurried out of sight. She thought she had escaped Zhao Yao’s wrath, but he followed up with another punishment.

“For the next year, you’re responsible for cleaning the cafe. And yes, that includes clearing everyone’s poop. Understand?”

“Yes, I understand,” she complied, her face scrunched up.

Toilet duty was going to be disgusting, but it was a fair deal. Anything would be worth a taste of that Royal Catmint.

“It was just...perfect,” she sighed dreamily.

Zhao Yao was not happy with Rice Cake, but he took comfort in the fact that the catmint did not go to waste. She had leveled up twice after all.

He took a seat and unlocked two new branches on her skill tree, his eyes lighting up as he read through their descriptions.

He picked Space Expansion as her level 7 skill and Dimension Doorway for level 8.

Space Expansion was a dynamic skill. It would grow with Dust Ball’s level. To be specific, it would expand the area within the belly to be her level multiplied by 100 square meters.

That meant that at level 7, the space would hit 700 square meters and now, at level 8, it would be 800.

Dimension Doorway, as its name suggested, allowed Zhao Yao to place three doorways to the belly anywhere in the real world.

The skills were both insanely useful and that made Zhao Yao ridiculously happy.

He could now enlarge the cats' living space continuously. That would be crucial for his mission to develop the Cat Nation. It would also mean that he could adopt more supercats.

The doorways transformed the extradimensional belly into a supercat transit. He could put one in the cafe and another in his house, rendering the dozens of kilometers between the two locations to nothing.

Apart from travel, the doorways would be useful in combat as well.

Zhao Yao could not help but wonder what the other cats' level 8 skills would bring.

#### Chapter 364: Cat Nation Evolution

Zhao Yao could not help the silly grin that was plastered on his face. Dust Ball's new skills were perfect.

The moment he unlocked them on her skill tree, a loud roar erupted from the depths of the extradimensional belly. The supercats watched in awe as the space they were in expanded rapidly before their eyes, stopping only when it hit 800 square meters.

They looked around curiously.

Dust Ball's paws fell to her sides. She had been in the midst of cleaning the cafe when she noticed the sudden expansion.

"Now I have more space to grow catmint!" she cheered quietly.

While the cats tried to figure out what was going on, Zhao Yao had moved on to testing out the next skill.

“Let’s try building a doorway in the cafe,” he thought.

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At Jiangmen City Train Station.

Black Panther walked out of the station, hoisting an enormous polypropylene bag over his shoulder. He took in these foreign surroundings curiously, his gaze panning slowly across the street.

A calico cat’s head popped up from the small opening of his bag.

“Oh man, so this is Jiangmen? Isn’t she a beauty?”

The cat meowed in agreement.

The two of them had been released by the police a few days ago.

The officer told him it was because he had never harmed others during his time at the Chuan Xiao scam syndicate. More importantly, he had somewhat aided the police by taking down some of his own men that day.

He had been let off with nothing more than a warning.

The first reason was true, but the second was not.

In reality, Inspector Ho believed that Black Panther was somehow related to the Headless Horseman. Setting him free was an extension of friendship to the Horseman. It was also a test.

The Panther had ended up in Jiangmen City because the police told him that the Horseman was here. He had hoped to find him and strike it rich together.

“Darn, the city is huge. Where could Mr. Headless be?”

The flurry of sights and sounds had been exciting, but as soon as this reality hit, he descended into a pit of worry.

As he pondered over his next step, a middle-aged man stopped by him. The stranger wore a kind expression on his face.

“Hello there! Have you just arrived in our city?” he asked cordially.

“Yeah,” Black Panther replied honestly.

The man did a quick once-over of him.

“You must be here for work, yes? I work for a recruitment agency. I can help you find work.”

“Work?”

Black Panther considered this seriously. He had literally spent all his money on the train ticket to get here. He would need a job if he did not want to go hungry.

He nodded at the stranger. “But I have no skills or experience.”

The middle-aged man swung an arm around his shoulder. He patted him assuringly.

“That’s not a problem. We’re looking for management trainees. You don’t need prior experience or knowledge. We’ll teach you everything you need. If you do well, you’ll rise up the ranks. Being a CEO would be a possibility.”

Black Panther’s eyes widened, his heart brimming with appreciation.

“Is everyone in Jiangmen so nice?” he thought.

He put his own arm around the man’s shoulder. “I never would have thought that I would meet a good person like you. It sucks that you caught me at my lowest, but don’t worry, it’s temporary. Once I find the Holy Water, I’m going to strike it rich. I’ll take you to the top with me. We’ll take

the medical industry by storm and transform the way we treat and heal people. We'll be the catalyst for a new generation!"

The impassioned speech momentarily stunned the man into silence. He could only nod, wondering if this newcomer was a bit soft in the head.

"We're brothers from now on, alright? I'll be here for you through thick and thin," Black Panther said, looking right into his eyes.

The middle-aged man hesitated.

"Do you not want to be brothers? Do you look down on me because I'm from the country?"

The man shook his head furiously. "No! No, not at all. I'm just pleased is all!"

That was enough for Black Panther. He patted the man's shoulder bracingly.

"My brother!" he exclaimed.

"Yes, yes. My brother," the middle-aged man repeated, albeit a lot less enthusiastically.

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Back at the cat cafe, Zhao Yao was studying the doorway that he had conjured. Only he could see it.

He stuck his head into the portal, then backed up.

After a bit of experimentation, he seemed to have figured out how the Dimension Doorways worked.

For starters, he could configure the doorways to be visible only to himself and Dust Ball. He also learnt that whenever he entered a portal into the belly, he would come out at its center. There was no way to change that.

Of most importance was the fact that both him and Dust Ball could restrict who could enter or leave the doorways.

“This is good stuff,” Zhao Yao concluded happily, smiling at the portal.

“I just need one at home, one at the cafe, and keep the last one with me. Wherever I put it, I’ll be able to get back. I can even use it in combat.”

If he met difficult opponents in the future, he could plant a portal before them. The doorways are invisible, so the opponent would fall right into the belly.

There, Zhao Yao could pin him with a pressure that was 10 times of gravity. Alternatively, he could rally dozens of supercats to attack.

“Perhaps the Sphynx alone would be enough.”

Zhao Yao had been furious with Dust Ball for eating the catmint without permission, but that turned out to be a pretty great thing after all.

The portals were just half of it. The space expansion was another.

The extra square meters had helped him to finally complete the third task of the Cat Nation mission. It required him to raise the area of the belly such that there were at least 50 square meters per cat.

Now that this was achieved, he was awarded 400 x 2 experience points. Coupled with the 400 x 2 points he got from Old Cat’s detailed intel, which spanned over two dozen reports, the Book now stood at Level 6 (3,962 / 20,000).

The fourth Cat Nation task had also been revealed.

Mission: How can the adorable kitties be without electricity and internet?

Objective: Find a way to provide stable electricity and internet access for the supercats

Reward: 800 experience points

Punishment: None

Zhao Yao's eyes lit up instantly.

“The first task was worth 100 points. The second was 200, third was 400, and now the fourth is 800?”

It seemed like the points were doubling with each task. He could not wait to finish this one to find out if that was really the case.

That night, he opened a Dimension Doorway in the middle of the living room once he got home. He entered it with a bundle of power strips cradled in his arms.

Some of the supercats watched him as he moved around. They were curious about what he was up to this time.

After all, a lot had changed recently. First, Red Packet and Old Cat joined the group. Then, today, their living space had expanded in size right before them. A portal had also appeared out of nowhere. They could not see where it led to. The door simply opened to blinding white light.

In general, cats hate change. Introducing a new cat to the family or even moving the litter box was considered earth-shattering news.

While supercats were smarter and faster to adapt to change, the barrage of new stuff they had experienced so far was a bit much.

They were starting to get a bit neurotic.

Chapter 365: A Thought

Lion Head was adamant that she was right.

“I’m telling you,” she stated, “Zhao Yao must have moved us to a new home! Look at how much bigger this place is! There’s so much light now. And look at that glowing door! How is it possible that we’re still in the space place?”

Uncle Egg was displeased. “Why must he make so many changes? Weren’t we perfectly fine before?”

A group of supercats had gathered to discuss the transformations made to their home. While they complained and whined, Zhao Yao had connected the pocket socket from his home to the power strips in the belly.

In that moment, the Cat Nation officially received electricity.

He then grabbed a modem and a bunch of cables and set up internet access in the belly.

After he explained his actions to the supercats, their doubt and suspicions immediately morphed into unadulterated excitement.

“I’ll never lose connection in the middle of a match again!”

“The automatic toilets will never have to be charged again!”

“My phone will never run out of battery!”

Zhao Yao plugged each laptop to a socket in the power strips, granting them endless electricity. He then announced the wifi password to the eager supercats.

Those familiar with the internet scrambled to go online instantly. The majority of the cats, however, had never touched the internet before. They wore curious expressions as they started exploring new features.

Zhao Yao grinned. “They’re just curious now, but they’ll be addicted in a couple weeks.”

He had successfully checked off the fourth task, earning 800 x 2 experience points. This brought his Book to Level 6 (4,562 / 20,000).



A fifth task had appeared as well.

Mission: Welcome more supercats

Objective: There's electricity, internet, great food, and a fantastic space. Your Cat Nation is now ready to accommodate more residents. Raise your supercat population to 50.

Reward: 1,600 experience points

Punishment: None

Zhao Yao licked his lips eagerly. "It's really 1,600 points!"

He was thrilled that the reward points were doubling with each task, but this one worried him a little. It would not be easy to care for 50 supercats at once. He was not even sure how he could get his hands on so many.

"Each task brings me closer to developing the perfect Cat Nation," he thought.

He felt that he was at least halfway there. The cats' living space was now massive. The Light of Creation illuminated the once dank belly with loads of natural light. Even the food was great. The pairing of Michelin-starred cat rice and the Light's special powers had boosted the well-being of each resident. Every cat here was in the pink of health and had a thick, glossy coat of fur to show for it.

The belly also offered them opportunities to pursue their interests and hobbies. Dust Ball's little catmint plantation had been flourishing. The Sphinx had access to his own special training area. Most of the cats were absorbed by the plethora of online games available.

Zhao Yao could not help the amused smile that spread across his lips.

"Perhaps one day, there would be hundreds of supercats living here. This would be pretty interesting."

As he savored this thought, the spirit of a cat gradually floated up to him.

It was Nekomata.

He had been diligently following Zhao Yao since the day the Cat King Competition ended. Every day, he would traverse back and forth from this house, to the cafe, and to Xiao Yu's house. This had been going on for close to two weeks.

He spent all his time closely watching and observing Zhao Yao's every move. He bore witness to his attempts at figuring out the Dimension Doorways. He had even followed Zhao Yao through the portal and ended up on the other side.

His eyes widened as he took in the new surroundings.

"Unbelievable. He has amassed an extraordinarily large number of cats for a person his age," Nekomata thought.

He let out a low whistle. "Is this fancy mansion just for them?"

He eventually turned his attention from the physical space to the number of cats that took up residence in it. Including the ones in the cafe, it seemed like Zhao Yao had more than 20 supercats.

"This fella could just be the most powerful apostle I've ever seen. He also owns the largest supercat organization I've ever encountered. This deserves further observation," Nekomata pondered.

He narrowed his eyes as he remained deep in thought.

"It makes no sense for Xiao Yu and Ho Hao Cang to continue being on their own. They should just join Zhao Yao."

"I doubt he can stay in charge forever after all."

Having come to a conclusion he was happy with, Nekomata darted swiftly out of the portal. His industrious observations revealed that Zhao Yao had the ability to control who can go through the doorways. He had no wish to be stuck inside because of a newly placed restriction.

He shot up the stairs, heading straight for the roof.

He took out his handphone.

\*

At the same time, deep in the heart of the city, Xiao Yu was walking along the football field of her new junior high school. She had just begun her first year there.

She was nudging a pebble with her foot with each step she took, only half-listening to the scrawny girl next to her.

“Xiao Yu, what should we do?” the girl asked, her voice tinged with panic, “Do we really give them our money?”

“Of course not. I barely have enough pocket money for lunch. I’m not giving any of it away,” Xiao Yu replied coolly.

“But...but how do we refuse? We’re at the very bottom of the social hierarchy right now. We’re only in sixth grade! We can’t handle the real middle-schoolers. Why must our city be the only one that sends sixth-graders to middle school? We’re supposed to be ruling primary school right now.”

Xiao Yu pursed her lips. “I’m still not giving them money. If they want it, they’ll have to pry it from my cold, dead hands.”

Her phone vibrated in her pocket as she spoke. She reached for it and found a message from Noodle.

“Huh?” she murmured, scanning through it.

Her eyes grew wider and wider as she made her way through the text. They were practically shimmering with delight when she reached the end.

In contrast, the girl next to her continued to lament over whether they should hand over the protection fees to their seniors.

\*

After spending the rest of the day organizing and furnishing the newly expanded extradimensional belly, Zhao Yao made his way home.

He was tired, but he could not stop thinking about how he could grow the Cat Nation's population. Capturing more supercats was not a problem for him. The issue here was ensuring that they all lived in harmony.

"If I introduced too many new cats at one go, the rest of them will flip. I have to take this slow."

His thoughts were disrupted by an uproar of meowing, followed by the violent striking of keyboards.

"Matcha! Why are you hiding in the grass?! Attack now!" Elizabeth commanded.

She then turned her attention to Rice Cake. "You! Come back here right now! Who gave you permission to charge headfirst?"

"Roly Poly..." Elizabeth's words were cut short by a loud smattering of gunshots.

The two opponents standing on a hill across from her collapsed to the ground.

She turned around to look at Roly Poly, whom had a smug smile spread lazily across his face. Her mouth hung open in shock.

"All taken care of. Small matter. Mango, zoom out," he said.

Mango was currently holding onto a magnifying glass with his teeth. He moved it away from the center of the computer screen.

Roly Poly tossed him a piece of dried fish, which he happily let go of the magnifier to lap up.

The fat cat had been trying to train Mango to do tricks for ages. While the usual “sit”, “left paw”, “right paw” commands never quite worked out, he found out that Mango could serve a highly useful and specific function at PUBG.

Rice Cake looked at Mango in awe. “Is this a new cheat?”

“I wouldn’t call it a cheat. It’s just an eight-time magnifying glass. Come, let’s play.”

### Chapter 366: Investments and Ideas

The team of four did not advance into the top ten at the end of the round.

However, it was still the most groundbreaking one for them yet. Roly Poly had managed to take out a total of three opponents. It was a new record.

Elizabeth, Matcha, and Rice Cake huddled around his screen when the match was over.

“Wow, your aiming has become so much better! I want Mango to hold a magnifier for me too!”  
Rice Cake said enviously.

Roly Poly shook his own head sagely while petting Mango’s head. “You can’t just ask him to help you. It’s not that simple. Cats are pretty much impossible to train. They don’t like following instructions and they get bored quickly. You need to put in a whole lot of love and patience to attain the kind of chemistry that Mango and I share.”

Matcha was no longer listening. He had cornered Lightning and smacked him on the back of his head.

“You’re my magnifier. Whenever I play a match, you have to stand by with a magnifying glass. When I ask you to zoom in, you put that magnifier in the middle of my screen, understand?”

Electric currents ran through Lightning's body in response, driving each of his hairs to stand on its end.

"Why should I?" he retorted angrily.

Matcha turned his head and called out, "Zhao Yao! Lightning tried to -,"

The Pallas' Cat fell to the ground immediately to ask for mercy.

"Okay, okay. I'll do it," he said unhappily.

He cursed Matcha under his breath.

"Tried to do what?" Zhao Yao called from the sofa.

Matcha chuckled, "Nothing. I just wanted to call you. You love calling us for no reason too, right?"

He then turned to Lightning. "Sit."

"Left paw."

"Right paw."

"Play dead."

Lightning executed each command perfectly, albeit unwillingly. Matcha patted his head as an indication that he did a good job. He then shot a thumbs up to his teammates.

"Training complete."

Elizabeth and Rice Cake looked at Matcha in awe. In contrast, Roly Poly threw him the dirtiest look he could muster.

“Well,” he cleared his throat, “The magnifying glass is just an aid. It is only possible to reach my current standard with skill. I’m sure you can see how much better I am at controlling my character now.”

The cats waited for him to continue.

“And the reason for that is I’ve bought an in-game accelerator,” he said smugly.

Rice Cake’s mouth fell open. “You? You bought an accelerator? But you’re super stingy.”

Elizabeth and Matcha looked at Roly Poly curiously, waiting for his reply. Zhao Yao had bought PUBG for them. They would never spend their own money on the game or an accelerator.

Roly Poly shrugged casually, as if the money was not an issue to him. “It’s just a bit of money. If you want, I can get it for you too.”

Their eyes lit up, practically emitting sparkles. They nodded vehemently.

Purchasing three sets of accelerators came at a cost, but it also granted Roly Poly the position of team leader. All of a sudden, his decision was the final decision. He commanded each of them in the next few rounds.

“Let’s jump to a more secluded location!”

“We’ll lie in ambush here. If you see an enemy, run!”

“Give me the 98k! I’ll throttle them!”

The four cats embodied the flight in ‘fight or flight’. They tried their best to remain hidden and undetected, choosing to run instead of attack when confronted.

Somehow, in the last round, they managed to inch their way into third place.

They had never been so close to winning before.

Elizabeth was ecstatic.

“You’re the best, Roly Poly! We’re actually third!”

She was looking at him with admiration, as was Rice Cake. Roly Poly was brimming with so much pride he felt like he would explode.

He thought, “It’s time for change! There will be a new order among the supercats in this household!”

Matcha was glaring at him from a distance. Jealousy was etched in every corner of his face. He tried to focus on the laptop.

Lightning could not help but gloat. He was still upset about being blackmailed into holding that stupid magnifier.

“Are you mad?” he asked gleefully.

“Mind your own business,” Matcha retorted, smacking his paw squarely on the top of Lightning’s head.

The contact involuntarily activated his power, resulting in both of them expanding into balls of fur.

Roly Poly could not help but relish in Matcha’s misery.

“Hehe. This is the power of intelligence and wealth. I used to have only the former, but now I have the best of both worlds,” he thought to himself happily.

He called out to Dust Ball as she strolled past him. “Hey, do you want more catmint?”

She cast him a glance, then gave a swish of her tail, indicating that she was listening.



“I can get more catmint and catmint seeds for you online. I can even get better quality ones,” he said earnestly.

“Are you paying for it?” she asked.

“Yes,” Roly Poly smiled, “As long as you join my alliance. I’ll even invest in your catmint business. I’ll give you a monthly fee.”

“I’ll think about it,” she said.

He could tell that she was just pretending to consider his proposition.

He chuckled to himself. “Elizabeth, Rice Cake, and Dust Ball are but the beginning! I will buy my way into the heart of every cat here!”

He unlocked his phone and opened one app after another.

“I have to start paying my loans next month. Oh well, I’ll just borrow the amount from another app. As long as I keep finding new providers to borrow from to pay off my loan, I will have an endless source of money! I’m a genius!”

“What are you giggling about over there?”

Zhao Yao’s voice alarmed him. He retreated into himself out of fright, hairs standing on their ends.

“We had a good round,” he answered awkwardly, “I’m just really happy.”

Zhao Yao threw him a suspicious look, but did not press further. Instead, he headed back to his room for training.

He morphed the deflective fields into invisible swords. They danced around him in the air, then started vibrating.

He had fashioned the orbs of power in the shape of swords so that they were more deadly. The lethal high-frequency vibrations of Lin Chen's sword proved to him that there was more than one way to achieving that goal.

"I wonder how much more powerful mine would be if they could vibrate at high frequencies too," he pondered, "But how do I even make them vibrate rapidly enough to cause serious damage?"

While he practised creating vibrations, he racked his brain for ideas on how to do so perfectly.

"I don't think I can reach the speed I want on my own, but I might be able to do so if I used another cat's power."

"Maybe Uncle Egg's electric currents? Or Rice Cake's earthquake-level vibrations?"

Zhao Yao scratched the bottom of his chin. He knew he was on to something, but he would need to experiment a little to find the right formula.

## Chapter 367: Loans and Deception

Ishida found that the local authorities took their job of shadowing him very seriously.

When he waltzed into the hotel lobby, the first thing he saw was a group of men waving at him from the couch.

He narrowed his eyes, then headed to his room with his assistant.

They might be a pain, but he would not allow them to thwart his mission.

"What should we do?" his assistant asked, "They're not gonna leave us alone."

Ishida curled his top lip. "This is both an instigation and a warning. We might not be able to act, but we will find someone who can do it on our behalf. Make sure that the person has no discernible relationship with us."

“Find someone to save Miss Hanako?” he repeated, “But we’re too unfamiliar with this country to find someone we can trust quickly. We can’t let you wait more than 24 hours...”

His words were interrupted by soft meowing that seemed to come from Ishida. He watched in shock as the head of a black cat emerged from behind Ishida’s shadow.

He could not understand what the cat was meowing about, but he was actually saying, “Are we done? I’m starving. When will food be served?”

“Is that...Sir Kagemaru? Our great Blademaster has sent him here?” the assistant asked.

“He has, which is why we don’t have to worry about taking too much time,” Ishida said, patting the top of the black cat’s head.

He might not be able to understand the cat, but he has been by his side for more than half a year. Naturally, he could guess what he was saying.

“Call room service. He needs dinner. Make sure that the food is free from salt and MSG,” Ishida ordered.

The assistant complied obediently.

“Do we have to ask for help from Japan?” he asked.

“No,” Ishida responded firmly.

This was his first overseas assignment. He refused to ask for help on the very first day. He was confident that he would complete it successfully all by himself.

He fished for the phone that he had stuck in his pocket.

“I will make a call. I have a friend who’s found his footing in Jiangmen City.”

\*

In an office building downtown, a man's phone began to buzz.

The middle-aged man was dressed immaculately. His hair was combed tidily, not a strand out of place. A gold necklace sat on the base of his neck, barely in view. He took his phone from the pant pocket of his three-piece suit.

He raised his eyebrows when he saw the caller's name.

"Why would this guy call me?" he wondered, then picked up the call.

"Moshi moshi, Mr. Ishida?"

"Yes, it's been a while. Who would have thought that you would take the initiative to contact me."

"Oh, you need info on someone?"

"We may not be specialists in background investigations, but I doubt this would be difficult."

"Alright, so the target is called Zhao Yao..."

The man hung up after collecting the necessary basic information. He then shot a quick message to someone else.

"You there? Help me do a quick check on a man named Zhao Yao. He should be a local. Graduated from university about two years ago. Looks like a creep. Acts like one too. He's willing to do anything to get ahead in life."

"Boss, that name is familiar. Give me a moment. I'm running through our database now. Do you want a summarized profile or a detailed one?"

"Detailed."

A few minutes later, the man received the text he was waiting for. It contained an in-depth report of Zhao Yao's profile.

At the end of it was a surprising note.

"This guy borrowed RMB 2,000 from us?" the man chuckled.

He clarified this with his employee.

"He's not the only one who took a loan. Even his sister and aunt are indebted to us. They've chalked up thousands of dollars worth of loans."

The man eyed Zhao Yao's profile again, smiling.

"Very interesting."

He shared all that he knew with Ishida, whom was taken aback by the news.

"This Zhao Yao owns his own cat cafe. He's even the super doctor of China's top officials. He should be rolling in money, not borrowing from money-lending apps. Even his family is borrowing money too? What's going on?" he thought.

"Could you have gotten the wrong person?" Ishida could not help but ask.

"No way. He owns that cat cafe, right?"

Ishida bit his lip. "Well, if his family is in some money trouble..."

An idea struck him.

"Matsuo, you must have his mobile number, don't you?"

Every user of a money-lending platform must create an account before being able to use its services. Basic information like contact details is always collected during registration.

Matsuo, the middle-aged man, laughed. “We absolutely cannot share the personal information of our clients.”

“I’ll buy his info for a hundred thousand dollars.”

“Oh, well, if that’s the case, thank you for doing business with us.”

Half an hour later, Ishida hovered over his assistant, dictating the message that will be sent to Zhao Yao.

The first message read, “Excuse me, are you Zhao Yao?”

The response was almost immediate. It was neither a confirmation or denial.

“Who are you?”

Ishida took some time to craft the next one. “I’m just a fan of your super healing abilities. I’ve heard much about it.”

“What do you want?”

This reply took an even longer time to create.

“I also heard that you’re facing some financial issues right now. I would like to help you.”

“Add me on WeChat. We’ll talk there.”

Ishida’s eyes lit up. A rare smile graced his lips. “Seems like I can buy my way to success.”

“You are a genius, my lord!” the assistant praised, eager to please, “We won’t even have to lift a finger!”

“We don’t know for sure yet. He is a rich man. We might not have the appetite to swallow his demands.”

They added Zhao Yao on WeChat and browsed through his friend’s list.

“These are all cats. Are they all his?” Ishida asked.

“I believe so. I’ve definitely seen this one in the cafe before. He’s alarmingly fat, so he made quite a big impression on me.”

Ishida nodded, then asked his assistant to fire a greeting to Zhao Yao. “Hello!”

Zhao Yao skipped all formalities. “How much money will you give me?”

The straightforward question stunned the both of them momentarily.

“He’s a bit too direct, isn’t he?” Ishida commented.

He thought about what he should say next. “There’s a Japanese waitress at your cafe, right?”

“Why?”

“A friend of mine greatly admires her. Can we get to know her?”

“\$1,000.”

Ishida’s face contorted in shock, then rage. “Is he asking me for money?! What does he think Hanako is?!”

“Lord Ishida, now is not the time to get angry.”

“I know, I know,” he waved the assistant off.

He stifled his fury and arranged for the money to be transferred to Zhao Yao.

“Could you please arrange for Hanako to have a meal with us?”

Ishida knew that he could not take action anywhere near Zhao Yao or the cafe. He planned to meet Hanako somewhere else and take her back to Japan.

He waited patiently for 20 minutes. However, a response never came. He asked his assistant to send another message to Zhao Yao.

It failed to send. Zhao Yao had blocked their number.

Ishida gawked at the phone,

“Wait a minute. What’s happening? Why has he blocked us?”

The assistant wiped the sweat from his brows. “Lord Ishida, I believe we have been conned \$1,000.”

Ishida was so furious that it felt like his lungs were ballooning to the verge of explosion.

What kind of monster were they dealing with?

Chapter 368: Young, Dumb, but Not Broke

Roly Poly broke into a face-splitting grin when he saw the extra thousand dollars in the WeChat account. He was awfully pleased with himself.

“Dumb people are everywhere,” he thought happily.



He had to put his phone down when Elizabeth called for him.

“Roly Poly, where are you?” she demanded, “We’re surrounded!”

The fat cat immediately put his paws back on the keyboard. “Don’t panic! I’m here!”

\*

While Roly Poly reveled in his gain, Ishida was burning with rage from his loss.

“Scumbag! How could he swindle a stranger like this?” he spat.

“Should we call the police?” the assistant asked.

Ishida turned to him in disbelief. He kned him in the shin, causing the man to topple over.

“Have you gone mad? Us?” he said, pointing to himself, “Calling the police? Us? Seriously?”

His stubby right-hand man was at a loss. “Then what should we do?”

“We’ll create a new account and contact him again. This unfortunate turn of events was not completely fruitless. At least now we know that his greed knows no bounds. We’ll use that against him. This time, we won’t transfer the money until he does as he promises.”

10 minutes later, Ishida threw the phone across the room in a fit of rage.

“What the heck? He blocked us because we didn’t want to transfer the money? Does he need money that badly?”

Ishida had met all kinds of people on his climb to the top, but he had never had the displeasure of dealing with someone that greedy. He was greatly tempted to rush to his cafe and just fight him.

Unfortunately, this was nothing more than a fantasy he could not act on, at least not with the apostle officers still in the lobby.

He took a deep breath.

His best shot seemed to, once again, lie with Matsuo. He picked up the phone and dialed his number.

“Hey, you said that Zhao Yao’s relatives also borrowed money from you, correct?”

“Yeah. Why?”

“Loans apps like yours must employ debt recovery services, no?” Ishida asked.

Matsuo raised his eyebrows. Of course he did. Some of his users just refused to pay their loans. They did not care if their names were blacklisted, not just by his app, but by every bank in the country.

Under such unfortunate circumstances, they would sell the account to professional debt buyers for a low price.

“Just how much money does this Zhao Yao owe you? Are you serious about implicating his family too?” Matsuo asked, scratching his chin.

“I’m unable to disclose my reasons to you. However, I am interested in buying his debt. Will you sell it to me?”

Matsuo shook his head even though Ishida could not see him through the phone. “We have rules to abide by. You know I want to help, but I can’t just snap my fingers and make this happen.”

There was a firmness in Matsuo’s voice that was not there before. Ishida knew that there was only one way to convince him.

He had to grovel endlessly.

Thankfully, it worked.

Ishida smiled triumphantly, “Okay, I look forward to the information packet you’ll share with me.”

A few minutes later, the promised info reached his phone. They contained personal details of Zhao Yao’s younger sister and aunt.

“Let’s start with the sister. They must be closer, so she would likely be an easier target,” Ishida said.

He turned to his assistant. “Onitsuka, send her a message. I doubt it’ll be hard to bribe a college girl who’s knee deep in loans.”

\*

Back at Zhao Yao’s house, a vibration set off Roly Poly’s phone. The fat cat took a look at the new message.

“Oh? They’re targeting Zhao Xue now? They never would’ve guessed that I have dual SIM,” he chortled to himself.

Zhao Yao’s identity was not the only one that he had stolen for his escapades.

Every night, he would head downstairs to lend Zhao Xue his power of invisibility.

On one such occasion, he remained hidden from sight so that he could steal her identity card. He had since used it to chalk up more loans.

“I’m so grateful that Zhao Xue carries her ID everywhere she goes,” Roly Poly sighed blissfully.

His eyes then landed on Baiquan, then Hanako.

They lit up.

\*

“How is it? Has she replied?” Ishida asked anxiously.

“Yes, she has,” his assistant, Onitsuka, nodded, “She’s more polite than her brother was. Should we be honest with her?”

Ishida waved him off instantly. “No, don’t. Let me think about this.”

He scratched the bottom of his chin thoughtfully. “I don’t think it’s wise to be too frank. We might scare her off. All the same, we must be quick about it. We don’t have much time.”

There was a short pause as he considered his options. “Perhaps...”

Onitsuka interrupted him. “She’s sent us a message.”

“What does it say?”

“She said she’ll block us if we do not transfer RMB 500 to her in 10 seconds.”

“Bloody hell,” Ishida cursed, “Is the entire family that hard up?”

Onitsuka’s next words were careful, “So, do we give her the money?”

Ishida took a succession of deep breaths as if to calm himself.

“Do it,” he said, brows knitted together.

“How much?”

“500!”

Onitsuka did not need to be told again. He got to work immediately, thumbs flying across the screen as he made the transfer.

Within seconds, his entire body tensed. He blinked at his phone a few times, then looked up at his boss uncertainly.

“What is it this time?” Ishida fumed.

“She said we took more than 10 seconds to give her the money. She has blocked us.”

Ishida was speechless. He balled his fist tightly, then relaxed his fingers, exhaling as he did so.

“They’re a family of liars, cons, and absolutely scums of the earth. Atrocious!”

“What should we do now? Try Zhao Yao’s aunt?”

“We can try,” Ishida said, defeat seeping through his words, “But this time, we’re not sending any messages or entertaining any money transfers. Call her.”

\*

At Xiao Yu’s house, Fish Ball was hiding under his owner’s bed covers.

“It’s too cold! I’m literally freezing my butt off,” he complained, curling up into a tight ball.

He poked his head from underneath the thick quilt, then retracted it immediately.

“This weather is too much for lil’ old me. I shall leave when Xiao Yu is back.”

Fish Ball had always been susceptible to the cold, so he loved huddling under Xiao Yu’s covers. However, she never permitted him to do so.

He could only snuggle against her quilt in secret when no one was at home. He was adept at rearranging her bedsheets and covers into their original position, leaving no trace of his misdeed behind.

“This is perfect weather for playing games underneath the covers,” he sighed contentedly.

Fish Ball settled into the most comfortable possible position and opened the King’s Glory app. He was about to start a match when he received an incoming phone call. It was from an unfamiliar number.

“Hmm? Who could that be?” he wondered, eyeing the digits flashed on the screen with suspicion, “It must be a scam.”

He decided to decline it.

He ended having to decline a few more calls in succession. All of them came from the same strange number.

“Why, I never knew that scam groups were so dedicated.”

He was about to reject the call again when a tremendous weight descended on him. He found himself wedged uncomfortably between this horrible weight and the mattress.

Noodle licked his lips as he lay on top of the covers. He shifted around, causing Fish Ball to yelp in pain from the movement.

“Get off me, you dumb dog! Who said you could get on the bed? I’m telling Xiao Yu about this!”

“Go ahead. Tell her and she’ll know that you snuggle against her covers pathetically when she’s away at school every day.”

Noodle adjusted his position again, accidentally rejecting another incoming call in the process.

Chapter 369: Strategic Shift

Ishida and Onitsuka kept trying.

Unfortunately, their hard work did not pay off. Not a single one of the calls got through.

They ended up sending her a text message instead.

In that moment, it seemed like all three leads had gone cold.

“Lord Ishida, what is our next move?” Onitsuka asked.

While the assistant was clearly feeling defeated by the succession of failures, Ishida looked like he was just getting started. You could almost see the cogs turning in his mind.

“We’ll have to change our strategy,” he concluded simply.

There was a venomous expression on his handsome face.

Ishida spoke to the shadow that was settled next to his feet. “Have you finished eating, Kagemaru?”

The shadow was no longer as compact as it had been. It was now at least five meters long. Tendrils branched out from the black mass, sweeping the plates of food on the table into its depths, from which emitted sounds of chewing and swallowing.

The shadow let out a satisfied meow in response to Ishida’s question.

“Good. Then let’s go.”

The solid outlines of Ishida’s body began to soften and blur before Onitsuka’s eyes. He watched in awe as Ishida began to merge with the shadow, eventually becoming one with it.

“This is Lord Kagemaru’s power? It is phenomenal!” he exclaimed.

“The Chinese believe that they can keep close tabs on me, but that really is just wistful thinking. You wait here. I’ll be back,” Ishida said.

With that, the shadow darted out of the hotel room through the gap between the door and the floor.

As Ishida bolted through the hotel's hallways, he could not help regretting that he did not sneak into the country in shadow form.

"It would have kept those irritating officers off my back," he thought.

That might have been a mistake, but it was not too late to rectify it now. As a shadow, he could leave the hotel under their noses and complete his mission. As long as returned quickly and made deliberate appearances to show that he had been in his room all day, no one would suspect what he had been up to.

\*

That night, Zhao Xue was training at the usual spot near her brother's apartment.

It had been almost a month since she first started borrowing the Sphynx's power to train. It was obvious that the time and effort had paid off. Each of her movements was lightning quick and pointedly accurate. Every kick and punch she threw was accompanied by an audible swoosh.

The vast progress she had made was not lost on Zhao Yao.

"She's stronger than an Olympic champion now. She might even be stronger than an Avenger," he observed, watching her closely.

Zhao Xue was moving so swiftly that a normal person would be unable to catch what she was doing. It would just look like a great, big blur. Of course, Zhao Yao was no normal human. He had the combined power of five cats, so he was even quicker than she was. His eyes could discern each of her actions and he busied himself analyzing her attacking and defensive moves.

"She is on her way to being as powerful as the Butcher, but her body is transforming differently," he thought, scanning her from head to toe, "That Muscle Society was full of meatheads whose arms were too muscular to fit into sleeves. Zhao Xue looks more like a combination of a sprinter and a high-diver. She's more lean than muscular, but she sure packs a punch."



Zhao Yao's eyes glazed over as he considered why she was developing differently.

"Is it a gender thing?"

Baiquan's newly acquired body appeared in his head.

"Nope, that can't be it. Baiquan's not become a bodybuilder either. Perhaps it's because I leveled up the Sphinx. Maybe his ability is not just more powerful now, but more refined."

Zhao Yao was happy with this conclusion, even if he was wrong. The most important thing was that Zhao Xue and Baiquan were happy with their new appearance. Neither of them was particularly keen on packing massive muscles. If that had been the aftermath of their training, they would not want to continue and Zhao Yao would not want to coerce them into it.

While Zhao Yao continued his observation, Roly Poly was worming deeper into his chest. The fat cat was here because he needed to lend his power to Zhao Xue. Now that that was done, he had nothing else to do. He was cold and bored.

"It is animal abuse to be forced to come out here on such a cold winter's day! Does he want me to freeze to death?" he thought begrudgingly, curling into a ball.

Of course, these complaints were kept strictly to himself. He dared not mention them to his owner.

When the training session came to an end, Zhao Xue made her way to her brother, whom she saw as King George.

Her face was flushed from the constant exertion. She was panting so hard that the sound rang through the night. The temperature in the air was so low that there was visible steam pouring from her body.

She sat down and faced King George. "Did I do okay?"

"That was not bad at all. You've been working hard recently."

“I have to. There seem to be more and more apostles now. Some of them have even rallied together to form alliances at my university. The worst part is that supercat-related crime is on the rise. I must grow stronger.”

Zhao Yao nodded with understanding. Censorship of supercat rumors online seemed to have become more relaxed. The authorities have not officially acknowledged the situation, but they have also stopped eradicating the stories and conspiracies that were plastered all over the Internet.

When Zhao Xue was done grumbling about the current state of affairs, she turned to King George and looked at him seriously. She only started speaking when he turned to her.

“The Headless Horseman is her, isn’t it?” she asked.

Zhao Yao’s left eyebrow twitched involuntarily.

“How did you come across the Headless Horseman?” he asked in return.

“It was all over the Cat Web this morning,” Zhao Xue replied.

She rummaged in her bag and produced a handphone. She offered it to Zhao Yao carefully, as if it was not just a phone, but a piece of cherished treasure.

“Do you know about the Cat Web? You can access it with this phone. It’s a space for apostles and supercats to interact and bond. I was browsing through it when I read about the Headless Horseman, whom is supposed to be the strongest apostle in all of Jiangmen City. And guess what? The name of her supercat is King George!”

She was beaming at Zhao Yao, genuine excitement radiating from every pore. He could almost see stars shimmering in her eyes. She looked stupidly starstruck.

Zhao Yao pursed his lips. “Yes, that King George is me.”

Zhao Xue was delighted by his admission, but she wanted more information.

“So, does that mean that the Headless Horseman is her? It’s Guang Yu, isn’t it?”

“No.”

“What? How can that be? Isn’t she your apostle? Isn’t the Headless Horseman also your apostle? You just admitted it. I also read on the Cat Web that when the Horseman used her greatest power, she was bathed in bright, golden light, just like Guang Yu!”

Zhao Xue gently squished and pinched King George’s face, hoping to get a ‘yes’ out of him.

“It must be her, right?” she asked, batting her eyelashes.

Zhao Yao let out a heavy sigh. “What’s it to you? I told you. You don’t stand a chance.”

“That’s not the point,” Zhao Xue muttered, blushing, “I just wanted to know the truth. It’s so amazing that the amazing Headless Horseman is actually a woman. It’s also really cool that I know her personally and I’m the only one who knows her true identity.”

Zhao Yao moved away from her in annoyance. “Well, I would advise you to keep your nose out of the business of strangers. You should spend time on your family instead. You’ve got a brother, don’t you? It wouldn’t hurt to show him a bit of concern.”

It was Zhao Xue’s turn to purse her lips. “There’s no need for that. Mom told me that he’s struck it rich. He drives a fancy sports car and cohabits with some Japanese chick. He’s even blocked Mom’s friends from viewing his WeChat profile. Seriously, who does he think he is?”

Zhao Yao could not help but shoot his sister a glare. “There are two sides to every story. Middle-aged women love to gossip and exaggerate. He is your brother after all. You should be kind to him and you should keep in touch with him.”

She nodded begrudgingly.

Zhao Yao let out a sigh. “So, you mentioned that there are supercat alliances in your school now. Have you joined one of them?”

“Yeah, I did. I was curious, so I joined one. I wasn’t very impressed though.”

## Chapter 370: The Lesson on Delegation

“Just stop wasting your time on this group of self-proclaimed apostles,” Zhao Yao cautioned, “Instead of focusing your attention on these gossips, you should concentrate on your training. Understand?”

“Alright, alright.” Zhao Xue responded with a perfunctory nod. She had already grown numb to King George’s incessant lecturing. Every day, he would repeat the same old thing about keeping a low profile in order to ensure one’s safety.

Zhao Yao recognized that exasperated expression on her face and responded with even more lecturing, “Do you understand that this is all for your own good? Do you know how dangerous the world of superpower is? You never know what kind of power an average Joe might possess! You are just one mistake away from bidding farewell to this world!

No matter how strong you become, you are still powerless when other apostles have set their eyes on you. One sneak attack and you are dead.”

“Yes, yes, yes ...” Zhao Xue responded with another round of relentless nodding.

“Oh yes, did you happen to mention your power to the other members?”

Her forehead furrowed together as she replied with a violent shake of her head, “Of course not! You repeated so many times to never divulge my power. Obviously, I listened to you!”

“That’s good. You must remember that the key to any superpower battles is to keep your ability a secret.”

An invisible weight tugged at the corner of her lips, turning her face into a frown as she whispered in her head, “What happened to King George? Why is he so naggy nowadays? He’s just like my mum.”

After what seemed like an eternity, training finally ended which meant the end of the non-stop lecturing. On her way back to the dormitory, a thought suddenly dawned on her, “Oh shit, I forgot to mention about the money lending platform!”

Since joining the superpower group in her school, she had participated in an investigation surrounding a money lending platform. Originally, she wanted to consult King George on his opinions on this matter. However, it completely slipped her mind as she was preoccupied with all those lecturing.

“Never mind, I will bring it up during my next training ...”

...

Even though Zhao Xue had already left, Zhao Yao remained seated on one of the benches in the garden. He then sent a few slaps across Roly Poly’s giant belly before instructing him, “Roly Poly, you can go back first. When you’re in the belly, help me get Ares and Dust Ball over here.”

With a snap of his fingers, a tiny door appeared right in front of Roly Poly. The door was enveloped in beams of dazzling light. It was simply breathtaking.

Roly Poly immediately bolted towards this mysterious door as his furry body brushed across Zhao Yao’s calf as he disappeared into it.

The moment his body entered this portal, the original smile on his face instantly disappeared. In its place was a nonchalant expression.

Roly Poly muttered, “Tsk. Zhao Yao, this fella is getting distracted. He spends all his time on those two scumbags, Elizabeth and Matcha, instead of me. At this rate, I must hasten my progress to establish my empire!”

The moment he entered the extradimensional belly, a familiar rumbling rang in his ears. He could detect something inching towards him. The stomps grew louder and louder as a giant shadow loomed over Roly Poly, encapsulating his entire body within it.

“Roly Poly! You have finally returned!”

Bam! Lion Head instantly pounced atop Roly Poly's back, crushing him with her gigantic frame. Roly Poly almost fainted from this 'surprise attack' as the crushing weight continued squashing against him.

"Roly Poly, I think about you every day, every hour, every minute and every second. How about you? Do you miss me?"

Roly Poly exerted all his strength as he struggled to escape from this furry monster. Roly Poly immediately shot her a dismissive glance and retorted, "I'm busy. I have no time for your nonsense today." However, Lion Head seemed to be oblivious to his words and continued pestering him. Left with no choice, Roly Poly turned her invisible with a sigh of despair. To him, not seeing the problem was as good as solving it.

He then approached Ares and instructed, "Zhao Yao is looking for you. Just walk towards that bright door over there."

A glimmer shot across Ares's eyes as he thought, "That guy promised to bring me out one day. Is that day today?" Just the thought of leaving this place was enough to lift his mood as joy welled up in his heart.

Next, Roly Poly went over to the catmint garden. As usual, Roly Poly was busy tending to the plants as she carefully sprinkled water over them. She then scattered a handful of seeds over the soil with a wide grin plastered on her face.

Roly Poly then crept towards her with a serious expression, "How is it Dust Ball? Have you considered my proposition?" While he was speaking, an invisible force seemed to be pressing against his cheeks, distorting his face. Actually, it was caused by Lion Head's tongue licking furiously across his face.

Dust Ball reciprocated his seriousness with a gentle nod, "We'll talk about it after your initial investment. I am interested in a batch of catmint from Yunnan. I'll join you if this catmint appears in front of me."

"Hmph, just give me the URL by tonight. I'll help you settle it."

After a few rounds of short exchanges, Roly Poly left with a mysterious smile on his face. However, he did not leave. Instead, he began to pace up and down as he continued to observe the cats absorbed in their computer games.

On the other hand, Ares and Dust Ball had already appeared on the other end of the dazzling door.

Dust Ball had already gone through it umpteen times and was completely indifferent to it.

However, the same could not be said for Ares. He could hardly believe his eyes as he stared at this captivating night sky.

Since Hao Cang's demise, Ares had spent all his time inside the suffocating belly. He had already forgotten what it felt to be in the wild. This scene felt so strange yet familiar.

"It's so cold outside."

This was the first thing he noticed.

"What's the temperate?"

This was the first question which popped into his head.

Suddenly, it dawned on him.

"Where is my phone? Did I leave it back there?"

"That means I have no internet."

"Everything seems so dangerous without internet."

"I wanna go home."

Ares immediately swept his head around, only to realize that the door had vanished. This unsettling new environment plunged him into despair. His eyes then darted towards Zhao Yao as he spoke, "After some consideration, I realized that today isn't an ideal day for me to go out. I think we can postpone this excursion to a later date."

Zhao Yao began to cackle uncontrollably at Ares's predicament. The cat was a unique species. If not for the opportunity to hunt or mate in the wild, they would rather spend all their time in the comforts of a home. This was especially true for domestic cats. Zhao Yao just didn't expect a supercat to behave like this as well.

"Today is the day. From today onwards, the both of you will be going out frequently for missions."

Zhao Yao did not release them on a whim. Instead, it was to experiment with the delegation function of his BOOK.

Since reaching level 6, the BOOK had earned an additional function of delegation. This allowed supercats themselves to complete missions and earn experience points without Zhao Yao. However, the experience points earned could only be used on the cats themselves, and no one else.

However, this was good enough. If handled correctly, Zhao Yao could simply laze at home while the experience points continued to pour in.

Hence, he decided to see how it would all turn out by releasing them from the belly.

The reason Zhao Yao chose Ares and Dust Ball was because of the nature of their powers.

Ares's power provided the most impenetrable defense. Coupled with Dust Ball's escaping tools, this pair was the safest combination amongst the cats, hence making them the perfect guinea pigs.

On the other hand, Ares had been begging to leave the belly. Meanwhile, Dust Ball was already so used to life outside the belly.

Thus, Zhao Yao settled the two cats in front of him before explaining how the entire thing worked.

"This is King George's power. It allows you to complete missions and earn experience points to grow stronger ..."

"Missions? Grow Stronger?" Suddenly, Ares's eyes began to sparkle with excitement. After spending so much time on computer games, he was no stranger to the notions of missions.



“That’s right.” Zhao Yao nodded his head as he continued, “Today is your first time doing it, so I’m gonna tag along and remind you of some key points to take note of. After today, you will be on your own. The more missions completed, the more experience points earned, the stronger you grow.”

Those words were music to the cats’ ears as they listened attentively to Zhao Yao’s instructions.

Zhao Yao’s eyes began to scan his phone’s screen as he continued, “Firstly, you have to identify individuals who require your help. The individuals must be related to supercats. From my experience, it’s also dependent on their nationality. For example, it’s more likely to receive a mission from Japanese.”