

Am I A God 481

Chapter 481: Two Fistfuls of Cats and the Fragment Thief

Noodle was racing through the woods, but not on all fours. Instead, he was standing upright on his hind legs, looking very much more like a werewolf than a dog. Rice Cake was still securely in one of his hands. A misty glow shrouded her whenever there was a vibration on the ground.

Thanks to her power, every tree, house, and boulder that stood in his way was promptly blown up, clearing out a path for him.

The more he used her as an explosive device, the better he got at operating her. He knew exactly which part of her legs he should squeeze to produce a specific effect. It was like she was a game controller.

Not only did he have the knowledge of how to utilize Rice Cake, his paws had grown to be strong and dexterous enough to hold her in various positions. The amount of power packed in his paw could now rival a human's punch. In fact, it seemed like his overall physical abilities had been fortified.

Noodle tilted his head upwards and sniffed the air.

"It's Fish Ball!" he announced, eyes narrowed in determination.

He immediately took off in pursuit of his companion. He caught up to them in no time. With Rice Cake's help, he dislodged an enormous tree from the ground. It crashed onto the earth, right before Fish Ball and his rally of supercats. They skidded to a stop and narrowly avoided it.

Noodle chuckled darkly, "Are you running? Do you really think you can get away?"

The trio of female cats stepped in front of Fish Ball without hesitation, shielding him from the husky.

"Don't you dare bully our Oppa!"

“We aren’t afraid of you, stupid dog!”

“Fish Ball, darling, just go. Don’t you worry about us. We won’t let him get close to you.”

When the ladies turned around, they found that Fish Ball was already long gone.

Before they could react to this, Noodle had delivered a heavy blow against the back of their heads, knocking them out. They crumpled to the floor.

The husky gave chase again. He reached Fish Ball in a matter of seconds.

Of course, there was no way in hell that Fish Ball was going to give in so easily. When he detected the sound of rapidly approaching footsteps, he immediately unleashed a blaze of bright lights from every pore of his body. The light was so glaring that it was impossible to look into it directly.

This had been an effective defence, but it was used one too many times by now. Noodle knew that it was going to happen, so he had already shut his eyes tightly when he drew closer to the cat. He reached out and manage to grab Fish Ball.

“Switch off the lights now,” he ordered.

The light that filtered through his eyelids diminished steadily. He opened his eyes when he sensed that everything was back to normal. The first sight he was met with was Fish Ball, whom was looking up at him with large, round, and sparkling eyes.

“You put me through a lot of trouble to find you, Fish Ball,” he admonished.

The cat blinked at him innocently. “I’m just an adorable little kitty cat. I didn’t think I was worth all that effort to hunt me down.”

“Of course you’re worth it,” Noodle cut in, “Join me, Fish Ball. Together, we can change the world. Cats and dogs will never be the slaves of humans again! Do you really want to help Xiao Yu finish her homework for the rest of your life? Do you want to continue suffering under her tyrannical rule

or be brave for once and overthrow her? Our success might not last forever, but it will be worth every second!”

“That was beautifully put. Yes, I’m in,” Fish Ball agreed quickly.

To himself, he rolled his eyes. “This idiot must’ve gone mad. I’ll pretend to go along with him for now. Once Xiao Yu and Zhao Yao find us, he’s in for it.”

“Hmm…” Noodle did not expect that he could convince Fish Ball so quickly.

There was a pregnant pause as he studied the cat thoughtfully. Then, he said, “If that’s the case, eat this curry. This is our initiation. Once you eat it, we’re officially allies.”

Fish Ball looked visibly alarmed when he spotted the curry that was smeared in Noodle’s paw.

“Is it okay if I didn’t eat it?” he asked in a croaky voice.

He sounded like there was a ball of emotion lodged in his throat, threatening to be thrown up.

Noodle did not respond. Instead, in one swift move, he brought his paw down to Fish Ball’s face and smashed the curry into the cat’s open mouth.

Fat tears started rolling down Fish Ball’s face.

Noodle grinned in satisfaction. “Great! You’re one of us now.”

Fish Ball did not say a word. However, he was screaming internally, “Stupid dog, you’re dead! You’re finished! Once Xiao Yu comes for us, I will make sure you suffer ten times worse of what you put me through! I will make Xiao Yu sterilize you!”

For now, however, he kept quiet. Noodle grabbed him with his free paw and shouted, “Light!”

Obediently, Fish Ball released a surge of light that radiated in all directions except for Noodle’s. He alone could see perfectly while everyone else surrounding them would be blinded by the glare.

“Perfect. If anyone wants to fight us, the first thing we’ll do is give them a taste of your light show.”

Noodle raised his arm and extended it to different angles. Fish Ball diligently altered the course of his light accordingly to avoid hitting Noodle.

“From now, you’ll be known as the Fish of Joy. You, me, and the Ultimate Sorrow will take over the world together and overthrow the corrupt humans.”

Noodle raised both his paws. He was now armed with two fistfuls of supercats. With one paw on Ultimate Sorrow and the other on the Fish of Joy, it was as good as holding onto a high-frequency blade and a lightsaber.

However, a shadow of doubt was cast on his face.

“I feel like we’re missing something.”

He moved his head closer to Rice Cake, whom was still moaning softly.

“I...want...to...go...online...”

He then tilted his head towards Fish Ball, whom was completely silent.

“Fish Ball, you have to laugh,” he stated.

The cat stared at him blankly. “Huh?”

“You’re the Fish of Joy! You have to be, you know, joyful!”

There was a quiver in Fish Ball’s lips. It took him a substantial amount of effort to force a laugh.

“Ha. Ha.”

“Fish Ball, could I trouble you to laugh with more happiness, please.”

“Ha. Ha. Haaaa.”

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At the heart of the battle, Zhao Yao was still busy negotiating business with William.

The man was being knocked around like a tennis ball by the dragon. The deflective field protected him from life-threatening danger, but it was not fun being thrown around like that. The pressure from being crashed into the ground or against the side of a hill repeatedly was starting to hurt him.

There was a sadistic glow in the Cat Sage’s eyes as he continued tossing and flinging the golden man around. The man could muster as much strength as his dragon could, but he was way too light and slight. Every collision they made ended with him flying miles away while the dragon just stumbled a few steps back.

“Darn it!” William cursed.

He could feel a dull pain pulsing from within him. His organs had been knocked around incessantly and it was starting to sting. He knew that he could only keep up with this for that much longer. His only way out was to borrow money so he can get that Ultimate Counterattack Package.

In the meantime, the Cat Sage grew increasingly confident that the situation was entirely under his control now. In fact, he was beginning to find it fun to bully this little golden man and send him flying through the air.

He began to relax. The iron bite he had on the meteorite fragment loosened just a fraction. Unfortunately, that was enough for the fragment to be dislodged and instantly pried away from him by an invisible force.

He watched in horror as the fragment flew across the sky like a shooting star.

This was the work of Nekomata. He had been patiently waiting for the moment when the Cat Sage lost his focus. Once he loosened his bite slightly, the spirit cat had dived in to grab the fragment. There was a look of unadulterated joy on his face as he cradled the fragment in his hands, darting away as quickly as he could.

“No!” the dragon roared.

Its attention was directed away from William and was now firmly trained on the escaping meteorite fragment. It extended its humongous pair of wings. In a few flaps, it lifted into the air and headed straight for what was rightfully his.

Chapter 482: Renewal

“I’ll hand this apostle to you. I’m going after the fragment.”

The dragon let out a blood-curdling bellow as it flapped its huge, bat-like wings, hot on Nekomata’s trail. It roared through the sky like a living, breathing, fighter jet.

It did not take long to close in on the fragment. The dragon was centimeters from reaching it when an enormous face sprung into view. Cat Sage almost crashed into the monstrosity, which looked like it belonged to some grisly, supernatural being. It gave him quite the fright.

As a result, the dragon skidded to a halt in the air. In that moment, the ghostly face disappeared as quickly as it had appeared and Nekomata’s figure could be seen darting into the thick of the woods. The fragment was safely cradled in his arms.

Cat Sage’s eyes narrowed. It had become evident that the face was harmless. The fragment thief probably realized that there was no way he could outrun the dragon, so the monstrous face was his attempt at a distraction.

He was right. Nekomata could enter spirit mode and become invisible, but the fragment could not. The only way for him to evade the dragon was to get the heck away from it.

Cat Sage shrieked in rage, partially because his precious fragment had been stolen, but mostly because he fell for the thief’s little trick.

Roar!

“You are dead meat!”

The dragon tore towards the forest, paying no mind to the grove of trees that it demolished along the way. It was not difficult to knock them down, but it still slowed Cat Sage down, effectively keeping him from reaching his precious fragment.

Nekomata was overcome with a heady mixture of excitement and fear as he heard the dragon's roars keeping up with his pace. This was exhilarating. He felt...super cool.

Outside the woods, Cheese, Kimchi, and gang followed Cat Sage's instructions and had surrounded William. The apostle did not flee as they closed in on him. Instead, he wiped the blood from the corner of his mouth with the back of his hand and shot them a smug smile. The dragon was the only one who could throw him around like a ping pong ball. These cats, on the other hand, were unable to do him any harm.

With a menacing burst of laughter, William took one step closer to them. In response, the supercats took a few steps back. This widened the grin on his face. He knew he was going to beat them in one fell swoop. Cat Sage knew this as well. However, the fragment came first, so he had to relegate the man to his friends.

As William was about to make his move, the golden glow that enveloped him began to blink erratically, like a lightbulb that was about to go out. The light began to dim and was eventually extinguished.

His eyes widened.

He started to panic on the inside, “What's going on? Why has my power disappeared?!”

Zhao Yao answered him promptly, “The superpowers included in your special White Day combo package can only be used for a limited time of five minutes.”

“What?!”

“To continue using these powers, please renew the temporary package or purchase the permanent version.”

William's body was shaking. He felt sick. He could not believe that he had just spent his life's savings on temporary superpowers that belonged to him for a mere five minutes.

Cheese and the cats might be able to hear the conversation between William and Zhao Yao, but they noticed that their opponent's magnificent glow had vanished. They looked at each other, all of them wondering if this was an indication that his abilities had weakened.

"Are his powers depleted?"

"Maybe. His superpowers are extraordinary after all. They could have a time limit."

"Don't be rash, you guys. This could be a trap."

William watched the cats carefully. He knew that it was only a matter of time before they struck. Without hesitation, he shouted, "I want a renewal! I want my force field back!"

In an instant, the blinding, golden light was turned back on. The supercats narrowed their eyes at its return while William heaved a sigh of relief. He was finally back in the safety of his indestructible bubble.

"Thank God I can still renew it."

Zhao Yao's voice rang in his head again, "The force field has been activated. Please complete payment within three minutes. If payment is not made, it will be considered a contract breach between you and the system. The system would be able to deduct 100 points from any of your attributes as it deems fit."

William was on the verge of coughing up blood when he did a quick stocktake of his attributes. His strength, agility, and intelligence totaled to no more than 20 points. He did not want to find out what would happen if those values dipped below zero.

"Wait a minute. What do you mean by the system deducting 100 points as it deems fit?" William asked.

“It means that I will deduct points wherever I want and you have no say about it.”

William felt like that blood was really catching in his throat.

Zhao Yao continued, “More than 30 peer-to-peer lending platform apps have already been automatically installed in your phone to facilitate the process of borrowing money for the renewal.”

William found himself at a loss for words.

“I...”

He had thought that god_system was a godsend. It turned out to be nothing more than the biggest money pit in the world. He had dived headfirst into the pit and there was no going back. If he did not pay and lost 100 attribute points, the cats would tear him apart easily. If god_system disappeared right now, the same fate awaited him.

He was left with no choice but to whip out his phone and seek monetary aid.

He scrolled past the apps that Zhao Yao downloaded. They were all in Chinese and he could not understand most of it. He had also heard horror stories of how insanely the interest chalked up from these platforms, so he intended to borrow money from his friends instead.

As William fired quick messages to them, he asked, “How much does the permanent version cost?”

“The permanent package costs USD 50 million.”

William was ashen-faced. Even if he borrowed money from every one of his relatives and friends, he would still not be able to accumulate that amount of money.

“How about the temporary version?”

“Hmm. I’ll sell it to you at just USD 1.5 million. It’s a steal. I’m losing out from this.”

William's eyebrows were pulled tightly together in anger, but he did not say a thing. He simply glared at the phone as he focused on borrowing money from his friends, colleagues, and even his boss, whom agreed when he said that this money would help him get his hands on the fragment.

It took him more than 10 minutes to gather the USD 1.5 million. Zhao Yao did not confiscate the force field after the first three minutes. He set that limit just to hasten William's loan process

Once the money was in, the force field shrunk to fit William like an impenetrable, golden cling wrap. The indestructible body was back.

Menace flashed in his eyes as he let out a roar of rage and threw himself at the cats.

Chapter 483: Wolf's Howl

With his superpowers restored, it did not take long for William to round up Cheese, Kimchi, and the other cats. He knocked them unconscious in one swift move and tied them securely to his back with metal wire.

Xiao Yu was not paying any attention to how he subdued the cats. Instead, her eyes were trained on Zhao Yao. In a matter of minutes, he had somehow managed to get a stranger to transfer USD 3.5 million into his bank account.

In her eyes, that made him a legend.

"My dearest Zhao Yao, remember how I coddled you when you were a child?" she started.

The hairs on his arms and the back of neck stood on their ends.

"I remember you peeing on me when you were an infant," he retorted in a deadpan voice.

Xiao Yu narrowed her eyes momentarily, but her face broke into a grin again.

"How about I give you Noodle and Fish Ball and you teach me how to earn money so quickly?" she proposed earnestly.

Zhao Yao turned to her and glared. “Earn money? What’s the point of having so much money? Take it from me – once you’ve accumulated a certain amount of wealth, money is nothing more than a string of numbers. My biggest regret is to earn so much of it.”

Xiao Yu rolled her eyes in response, “Why don’t you transfer that money to me then?”

“Sure,” Zhao Yao said, fishing for his phone to start the transfer.

Xiao Yu’s eyes lit up like stars in the night sky. She squeezed his forearm in joy.

“Good boy! I’ve not doted on you for nothing,” she beamed.

She stared at the screen on his phone as he entered a long string of zeros into the text box. She was so excited by now that her face was flushed and her heart was thumping against her chest. All of this came to a standstill when Zhao Yao transferred the money to his own WeChat account and not hers.

“Zhao Yao, that’s not my account!” she protested loudly.

“Oops, too late. I’ve already made the transfer.”

Xiao Yu gritted her teeth in anger. Zhao Yao ignored the rage that was rolling off her. His thoughts were happily latched onto the influx of money that had poured into his WeChat account.

He knew that he had milked William for his worth, so he decided to end the quest.

Altogether, he had received USD 2.5 million + USD 1.5 million, which totaled to an impressive 7,000*2 experience points. These points were instantly added to his Book, which became Level 6 (38,262 / 20,000).

Zhao Yao could have jumped for joy.

“The life of a conman is a profitable one. This is so much easier than having to fight supercats and catch the bad guys,” he thought.

With Cheese and the other supercats defeated, William was unsure about what to do next. Loud rumbling and regular blasts were still coming from the woods. It was obvious that the dragon had not got its claws on the meteorite fragment yet.

William very much wanted to join in and snatch the fragment before the dragon could. However, he was not confident that his temporary skills could last that long.

This thought had barely crossed his mind when an update appeared on god_system's mission panel.

“Defeat the dragon and get the permanent version as a reward.”

William's eyes nearly bulged out of his head.

“I'll just take a look. If I can't handle it, I'll take the unconscious cats and run. If I can...”

He let out a few deep breaths before sprinting into the forest.

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When the dragon screeched, Nekomata would scamper forward even more quickly.

He had run into the woods to seek cover from the dense grove of trees. That had worked like a charm to slow the dragon down. By now, however, many of the trees had been uprooted and destroyed, leaving him with substantially less protection. Worse, the dragon did not seem at all tired from knocking down the giant trees. It was still in close pursuit.

Nekomata had attempted to hurt the dragon with his telekinesis. Unfortunately, it was too large to be grasped and manipulated. He could not even make it turn its head an inch.

At this point, it seemed that his only option was to give up the fragment. If he let it go, he would be able to lapse into spirit mode and become incorporeal and, therefore, impossible to touch or hurt.

Nekomata was struggling to make a decision when there was an abrupt turn of events.

His ears twitched as he picked up the sound of distant howling, which grew steadily louder as a dog emerged out of nowhere. It bolted towards the dragon and stopped right in front of it, blocking its way. The dog had one cat in each hand.

Nekomata's eyes grew wide with surprise. He instantly recognized the dog to be Noodle and that the cats in his grip were Rice Cake and Fish Ball.

He shouted a warning to them immediately, "Run! Don't fight the dragon!"

Noodle showed no signs of heeding his advice. He let out a few short, aggressive barks, then threw himself at the dragon.

Cat Sage was unperturbed. Even as a cat, he had never been impressed with or intimidated by dogs. His lips curled into a smirk, revealing a row of sharp, lethal fangs. He swiped at the husky with one claw.

In response, Noodle raised one of his paws into the air. That was the paw that held Fish of Joy. An explosion of light erupted in a sea of laughter, leaving the dragon blinded and in pain. It let out a cry as it stumbled around, madly swinging its tail and claws around in hopes of hitting the perpetrator.

Noodle was too nimble for that. He dashed around the dragon and leaped onto its back, where he planted Ultimate Sorrow.

Bam!

The moment Rice Cake made contact with the dragon, the super high-frequency vibrations she radiated hit it at full force. The dragon shrieked in pain as its armor-like scales were sliced into thin pieces in a burst of blood and flesh.

Noodle raised his paw and struck it against another part of the dragon's back, shredding it into a bloody mess as well. The dragon was doubled over and squalling in agony. It looked like it was just trying to escape the husky.

Cat Sage might be in the form of a mighty dragon now, but he was still a cat at heart. Right now, he was blinded and in terrible pain, so it was only natural that he had curled into a ball of fear and confusion.

Unfortunately, Noodle was not going to let him off so easily.

“Where do you think you’re going?” the husky shouted, immediately racing after the dragon, “Whooooo-ahhh-tah! Wa tah! Wa tah, wa tah, wa tah!”

He was beating the two cats against the dragon’s back like a pair of superpower nunchucks.

Nekomata watched the scene unfold with his jaw dropped. He was in disbelief.

“Has Ho Hao Cang been awakened?” he wondered in disbelief, “That’s impossible. He’s not a cat in the first place. And when did Rice Cake and Fish Ball agree to be his weapons?”

Nekomata was itching to film this on his phone, but he had stashed it away so that he can be completely undetectable in spirit mode. All he could do now was to continue watching.

It soon became clear that Noodle had the upper hand only because of the element of surprise. Fish Ball and Rice Cake’s superpowers were completely unexpected. The sudden outburst of light, combined with the unforeseen damage from the vibrations, temporarily incapacitated the dragon.

However, this would not last for much longer. Dragons were possibly the biggest, strongest, and most resilient creatures ever. Rice Cake had wounded it, but the injuries were in no way lethal. Noodle would not be able to slay the dragon. He just made it very, very angry.

When a window of opportunity presented itself, the dragon took it and flapped its wings rapidly, lifting its massive body high into the air. It tilted its head in the direction of its opponents and opened its mouth, spewing a tornado of fire that headed straight for the ground.

It seemed like the dragon had finally regained its upper hand when a beam of golden light cut through the sky from the horizon.

It was William.

With one giant leap, he landed squarely on the dragon's back. He raised both hands into the air, then brought them down and wedged them deep into its wounds.

The dragon writhed in pain and began flailing towards the ground.

Chapter 484: Evolution

A sonorous boom echoed through the woods as William and the Cat Sage hit the ground in a heap. Noodle let out a bark of laughter as he rushed forward and vaulted onto the dragon's back, eager to resume his attack.

Nekomata could not help the sigh of relief that escaped his lips as he watched the man and dog bashing the dragon mercilessly. He looked adoringly at the meteorite fragment cradled in his paws. He was not sure exactly what the fragment was, but he knew that it was good for supercats.

The dragon lay on the grass, immobile. It was bleeding heavily from large, open wounds that were covered all over its back. William stood triumphantly on the defeated creature as he checked out his mission panel. His eyes lit up when he saw that he had been awarded the permanent superpowers. He could barely contain his excitement.

As the saying goes, 'You don't know what you have until it's gone'. Having experienced the despair of losing his mighty powers, he now cherished them with all his heart. He treasured it so much that he headed straight for the dragon instead of sneaking up on Nekomata to steal the fragment.

That intention, however, was still very much on his mind. He was feeling confident and he wanted to take action. He turned to face the husky and Nekomata.

"Since this guy's been defeated," he spoke in heavily-accented Mandarin, "We should split the fragment between us."

Immediately, Nekomata hid the fragment behind him and turned his body away from William. Noodle raised two clenched fists in front of him, ready to fight the man.

William narrowed his eyebrows. If looks could kill, the cat and dog before him would have dropped dead.

Noodle began to bark, “Hmph, did you think you can just waltz in here and take what is ours? You’ll first have to get permission from my two cats!”

The husky had been undefeatable since he got his paws on Fish Ball and Rice Cake. This success had bolstered his confidence levels tremendously. He was getting cocky. He would have attacked even if this was Zhao Yao, much less some random apostle.

He was not afraid.

Once Noodle punctuated his statement, he bent his knees and propelled himself towards William, leaving a whirl of dust and grass in his trail.

William remained rooted to the spot. There was a sharp glint in his eye as he raised his fists, ready to strike back.

Before the two could collide, Noodle found himself losing strength and speed rapidly. His new-found power had inexplicably disappeared. He found himself losing balance and tumbling forwards clumsily, stopping right before William’s feet. Even the robustness of his paws was gone. He failed to grip the two supercats tightly enough and they flew out of his grasp.

Noodle lifted his head and his eyes met William’s cold gaze. In that instant, the husky knew that there was no way he could fight back, so he stuck out his tongue and started whining, “I’m sorry, boss. I’ve made a mistake.”

William did not understand what his sounds meant, so he grabbed the dog by the neck and lifted him off the grass. Noodle did not fight back or demonstrate any of its previous superpower abilities. It seemed like he had reverted to being a normal dog. This made William laugh in relief, “Thank God.”

He then turned his attention to Nekomata, whom was still holding onto the fragment.

“Your partner is in my hands now. If you want him to live, you’ll hand that fragment to me.”

A pained expression made its way to Nekomata's face. The meteorite fragment in his paw was magical. He could feel himself growing stronger by the second just from holding it. That felt a million times better than the high that the best catmint could give him.

However, he did not want to let Ho Hao Cang die either.

William let out a derisive snort as the cat weighed his options. He tightened his vice grip around the husky's neck. Noodle's tongue rolled out of his open mouth. His face was beginning to turn purple.

"I'm serious. Give me the fragment or I'll wring this idiotic dog's neck," he threatened.

Nekomata let out a sigh. He was left with no choice. He had to give up the fragment. However, he wanted to make sure that the man released Noodle before he handed it to him. As long as Noodle's safety was no longer compromised like it was now, he could slip into spirit mode and steal the fragment back eventually.

Xiao Yu, who had been carefully watching everything, turned to Zhao Yao.

"Hey, shouldn't we step in now?" she asked.

Zhao Yao shook his head no, "Don't worry, no serious harm will come their way. This is the perfect opportunity to teach them a lesson. Those two aren't well-disciplined enough, which is why they're stirring trouble all the way here. Let them suffer a little more. They'll be extra thankful when we rescue them and they'll listen to every word you say in the future."

With that, he snapped his fingers. In a matter of seconds, Matcha's head had popped out from the extradimensional belly. A serving tray was balanced on top of his head. A steaming mug of coffee sat in the middle.

Zhao Yao lifted the mug to his lips and took a sip.

"See how well-behaved my cats are?" he asked, grinning.

Xiao Yu nodded thoughtfully, "I'll train Fish Ball and Noodle to cook and wait on me once we're home. It'll look so cool."

Back in the center of the battle, Nekomata had finally decided to toss the fragment towards William. The man caught it easily. His eyes shone with excitement as his fingers brushed the fragment.

“I’ve finally got you.”

His excitement had transformed into some kind of fanatic zeal. It was like all the stars had aligned. He had indestructible superpowers, permanently this time round. He also had the meteorite fragment. Best of all, he was on an island populated entirely by supercats. He could set up his own superpower faction right here, right now.

He was so absorbed by his thoughts that he did not notice that the dragon beneath his feet had begun to stir. There was movement behind his eyelids before they started to open.

Cat Sage had lost because the fragment had been taken from him. Now that it was in William’s hand, the dragon was close enough to once again receive the power it radiated.

By keeping the fragment on him all the time, Cat Sage had never stopped growing stronger. He had always known that one day, this would reach a tipping point. When that happened, his steady improvements would cumulate into an evolution for the ages.

He never expected that it would take place right now.

His heart was beating rapidly, pumping bursts of blood through his veins to every part of his body. He started to shed his scales like how a snake would moult its skin. They were giving way so that the bones, joints, and muscles that made up his large frame could grow even bigger and stronger.

When William finally noticed that this was happening, he cast Noodle aside and pelted punch after punch at the dragon. Unfortunately, the damage he incurred was minimal. It was mainly Noodle and Rice Cake who had destroyed Cat Sage’s defences previously after all. Without them, he did not stand a chance.

William battered the wounds on the dragon’s back ceaselessly, but he could not stop the evolution. Strips of solid muscle were blooming on top of the injuries and were intertwined to form a stronger, sturdier body. A faint golden glow was radiating from it.

At the same time, two mounds of flesh had sprouted on either side of the dragon's head. They mushroomed at an alarming rate and while William did not know for sure what they were, he could already sense the menace within.

Chapter 485: Surrender

"We need to work together! We have to stop the transformation!"

Having recovered from his initial shock, William finally figured out what was happening. He swiftly flung the net of concussed supercats away. Then, he tossed the meteorite fragment even further.

It was too late.

The fragment had already fueled the last stage of Cat Sage's evolution. Nothing could stop the dragon's metamorphosis. Its colossal body grew larger still and was soon adorned with a glistening coat of golden scales.

William was undeterred. He raised both fists and began pummeling mercilessly against its back like a pile-driver.

Nekomata joined in as well. He used his telekinetic powers to pry open the wounds that had been freshly mended together.

Fish Ball climbed onto his feet as well. He released a beam of bright light that tunneled right into the dragon's eyes.

Rice Cake and Noodle did not join the fight. They were both sprawled out on the floor, albeit for different reasons. Rice Cake was still wallowing in self-pity and could not care less about what was going on around her. Noodle could not move because he had sprained his hip after William threw him to the ground.

Amid the explosions and screeches, the dragon continued to rapidly expand in size. Soon, it rivaled the length of a commercial airplane.

This was not the only change that the evolution ushered. The two mounds of flesh that were perched next on its shoulders had burst open, revealing dragon heads that were drenched in the same gold color as its scales. The three heads tilted upwards in unison and let out a thunderous roar. The battle

cry created a visible distortion in the air. It produced a ball of energy that was as powerful as a vacuum bomb, sending an explosion of pressure waves charging in all directions.

William, Fish Ball, Noodle, and Rice Cake were instantly knocked off the ground and flew through the air. If Zhao Yao had not protected them with the deflective field, the impact would probably have killed them instead. Nekomata had slipped into spirit mode quickly enough to avoid getting hit.

The earth-shaking explosion woke the band of unconscious supercats from their slumber. They gaped at the three-headed dragon before them.

Cheese was the first to wrap his head around what they were seeing.

“The sage has succeeded!” he exclaimed in delight, “His superpower has evolved!”

The dragon’s physical form was still transforming at this point. The layer of golden, armor-like scales was still making its way across its gargantuan body. The aura it radiated grew more and more lethal.

William had no wish to witness what the dragon would be like at the end of the evolution. Its deadly aura was too much for him to bear. He turned and tried to make a run for it.

Unfortunately, this did not escape the dragon’s eye. William had barely dashed a hundred meters when a monstrous claw fell from above and tried to pin him to the ground. He let out a cry of protest and pushed back, but he could only fight it off for a second. He screamed in agony and used every ounce of strength to shove the claw away, but it would not budge.

The dragon had not only grown stronger, but also more massive than ever before. He could defeat a tiny, little human like William with just his hefty weight alone. All it had to do was to close his claws around him to hold him securely in place. There was a flash of fear in William’s eyes when he realized that there was no way out of its iron grip.

The monster raised all three of its heads towards the sky again and let out another roar. This time, they did not work together to create a detonation. Instead, each head opened its mouth to spew something different into the air, which was soon filled with vortexes of flames, ice blasts, and poison.

Noodle and Fish Ball watched this with their jaws dropped. They were terrified.

Cheese and friends, on the other hand, were ecstatic. The more monstrous the three-headed dragon was, the safer their island would be.

Cat Sage was extremely pleased as well. He knew that an evolution would come, but this exceeded his expectations. This iteration of the dragon would be at least 10 times more powerful than the previous one.

For starters, its 60-meter long body would be enough for it to destroy entire cities by casually trampling through them. The sheath of golden scales was a lot sturdier than the one he had before. Anything short of a missile would fail to inflict any damage on him. Then, there were the two new heads, which equipped him with the ability to freeze and poison legions of opponents at once.

As the dragon, he was practically unbeatable.

This thought had barely crossed his mind when Zhao Yao appeared before him at last.

Three pairs of amber eyes squinted at the intruder. Then, one of the heads lunged forward, its jaw wide open.

“I don’t care who you are. I’ll capture you first and deal with you later,” he thought.

Unfortunately, the head never reached him. A red glimmer reflected in Zhao Yao’s eyes and Cat Sage felt himself losing control of the dragon’s body in seconds. Soon, he was paralyzed and completely unable to move.

Zhao Yao grinned. “What a handsome, golden three-headed dragon. You’ll make a great steed for me.”

There was a sinister glint in the dragon’s eyes. Cat Sage wanted to fight back, but he could not free himself from the man’s control.

“Aww? You’re not happy that you’ve lost?” Zhao Yao chuckled.

He tapped two fingers against the head that had charged for him.

The next moment, the dragon was sent ricocheting through the woods, knocking down dozens of towering trees that it flew into. It kicked up a storm of dust and dirt as it rolled hundreds of meters like a high-speed bowling ball. It went on for so long because Zhao Yao had used Elizabeth's mind-control to compel the dragon to keep rolling forward. However, to an onlooker, it would seem as if that tap on the head was tremendously powerful.

When the spinning finally came to a halt, Cat Sage felt that he had regained control of his body again. He scrambled onto his feet immediately and growled with rage, ready to get his revenge.

Zhao Yao zipped to him again and stopped right before the head in the middle. The eerie red glint was back in his eyes.

"Sit down."

With that, he leaped into the air and brought one foot down on the top of its head.

The dragon crumpled to the ground helplessly. To Cheese, William, Fish Ball, and the other onlookers, it looked like an invisible mountain had been placed onto its body, holding it to the floor.

The three heads were bellowing again. Each of them was straining to get off the ground. This prompted another red flash in Zhao Yao's eyes. The three heads shot right up, but were swiftly bludgeoned to the ground by an unseen force. The dragon's fierce roars were reduced to soft whimpers.

"Are you going to admit defeat now?"

William was transfixed. He remained flat on the ground as he watched one man swat the dragon around as if it was a fly, not a legendary monster. He felt like his eyes were about to pop out of their sockets.

When he finally made out Zhao Yao's appearance, he broke out in cold sweat.

"That guy... Wasn't he the rich kid I saw on the beach? Has he been watching us all this time? Did he only step in because he knew we can't beat the dragon?"

Speaking of the dragon, it was unable to fight back or escape Zhao Yao's grasp, but defiance was still spelled clearly in its eyes. Zhao Yao had a suspicion that once he let go, it would attack.

The corners of his lips lifted into a smile that did not reach his eyes.

He chuckled coldly, "I think someone's in need of some serious reformation."

As the man spoke, Cat Sage felt his back tense up.

He had a very, very bad feeling about what was going to happen next.

Chapter 486: Evolution

Zhao Yao smiled at the dragon.

"It's alright if you don't want to admit defeat."

The red glow in his eyes thickened into a scarlet fog. He had used Elizabeth's mind-control again. This time, he forced Cat Sage to revoke his superpower. In an instant, the three-headed dragon was reduced to a small cat that stood barely taller than the grass. The cat looked down at its body in surprise.

The corners of Zhao Yao's lips lifted into a satisfied grin. Of all that superpowers at his disposal, Matcha's and Elizabeth's were the most effective for one-on-one combat. As long as he was close enough to maintain eye-contact with the opponent, Elizabeth's mind-control would always get him the upper hand.

It was no different this time. He had spent time observing Cat Sage and his ring of supercats. Mind-control would do the trick.

Zhao Yao could not help a chuckle when he spotted his opponent in his original form. He scooped the cat into his arms and stroked the top of his head comfortingly.

"Everything's alright now. In time, you'll understand that everything I'm doing is for your own good," he said soothingly.

It turned out that Cat Sage was an American Shorthair with a chocolate coat of fur. He squirmed and writhed against Zhao Yao, trying desperately to avoid the touch of his filthy claws. His large eyes were narrowed in chagrin. However, he did not intend to transform into a dragon as retaliation.

Zhao Yao would like to force his new dragon steed into submission right now, but there were other pressing matters to tend to. There were plenty of loose ends to tie up on this island.

For a start, he had to deal with William. The American was useless to him now. There were no new missions that depended on him. The key supercats that ruled the island were also in his possession.

Zhao Yao cast a sideways glance at the man, whom jumped and started breaking out in cold sweat again.

William wasted no time to introduce himself, "I'm an investigator from Star Cats. My supervisors know that I've here. The supercat you're holding actually escaped from our lab..."

There was an annoyed twitch in Zhao Yao's right eyebrow.

"Of course, if you like him, you can keep him," William added quickly, "Under your supervision, I'm certain he won't cause any trouble for mankind. Well, if that's all, I'm going to leave now."

With that, he began to take a few slow steps backward, right in the direction of the meteorite fragment. He was frank about the cat, but kept quiet about the fragment because he hoped to leave with it unnoticed.

Zhao Yao smiled coldly.

"You're not too honest," he commented lightly.

With Cat Sage still in his arms, he ambled forward and picked up the fragment. It was the size of a clenched fist.

"This is the meteorite fragment, correct?"

William had no choice but to plaster a fake smile. “Yes, that is the fragment. We’ve conducted multiple tests on it. To date, we have not found it to hold any special properties.”

Zhao Yao did not respond to his words. He looked oddly preoccupied and thoughtful the moment he made contact with the fragment.

Main Mission: Assemble the meteorite

Mission: Collect all the meteorite fragments that had awakened the supercats

Reward: Receive 1 supercat skill point with every 10% of the fragments collected. Activate the supercat evolution module once 100% of the fragments are collected.

Punishment: None

After he had read the last word of the mission description, the meteorite fragment in his palm began to melt into liquid globules. The globules were absorbed into his body one after another. Zhao Yao spun around instinctively, using his back to prevent anyone from seeing what was happening. His eyes were widened in disbelief.

He could never have imagined that he would be able to absorb the fragment to evolve his Book.

His mind was whirling with questions and guesses. One of them in particular stood out, “Perhaps the main missions are used to upgrade the Book while the sidequests are used to fulfill my personal goals?”

This had only been the second main mission he had encountered. The first was to level up the Book. Every other mission he had been assigned so far could be considered sidequests.

This new mission also made it clear that the powers of his Book were closely linked to the mysterious meteorite.

“I always thought that the evolution module would be available after I level up the Book. Turns out I have to collect the fragments first,” he mused.

Zhao Yao scratched the bottom of his chin as he reflected on the progress of the Book from the very beginning. When he was first given the Book, it took him no time to notice the multitude of options and abilities that were locked. As it leveled up, some of them, for example the diamond hall and delegation panel, were made available.

The prospect of activating the supercat evolution module thrilled him.

“Gosh, will it be like Pikachu evolving into Raichu? I wonder what Matcha’s evolved version would look like,” he contemplated, “It won’t be easy to get all those pieces though. Any supercat or human that has one will not give it up without a fight.”

While he was consumed in his thoughts, Zhao Yao’s facial expressions transformed fluidly from one to another. William watched and waited, not knowing what was going on in the man’s head.

He spoke eventually, “Excuse me, sir? If there’s nothing else you need from me, I’m gonna get going.”

“Hmm?”

His voice brought Zhao Yao’s attention back to him.

“How many meteorite fragments do the Americans have?” Zhao Yao asked point-blank.

William was frozen in surprise for a moment, but recovered quickly.

“I have no idea. I’m an entry-grade investigator. They don’t tell me these things,” he replied smoothly.

Zhao Yao did not buy it.

He called for Old Cat and spat him out into the forest in an instant. He pursed his lips, then decided to bring out Matcha, Roly Poly, Elizabeth, Ares, Sphinx Cat, and a dozen more trustworthy supercats from the extradimensional belly. These were his trusted feline allies after all. With their help, he would be able to deal with all the loose ends on this island.

William gawked at the sight of the cats rolling out of Zhao Yao's open jaw in an orderly fashion.

The first order Zhao Yao issued was for Old Cat to squeeze every, last drop of intel from William. Due to the formidable nature of the cat's ability, he was not keen on releasing him into the real world. However, his curiosity about what the Americans might be hiding overpowered his caution. This was why he arranged for the two to have a private chat on the island.

Once that was done, he turned his attention to the rest of his supercats.

"Matcha, Roly Poly, Sphynx Cat, and Ares," he addressed, "Search the island and bring me every supercat you find."

The four cats sprung into action right away. They were equally eager to begin their mission, but there was an obvious disparity in terms of their speed and agility. While Sphynx Cat and Ares darted forward as quickly as a pair of lightning bolts, Matcha and Roly Poly could only run as quickly as normal house cats (which was not quick at all).

Zhao Yao raised a hand. "It's alright. Let those two run the circumference of the island. You guys can focus on nabbing the cats nearby."

Matcha immediately leaped towards Cheese and started stomping on his face with his paws.

"You rascal! How dare you steal my cat? Do you know how influential I am now?" he taunted.

To himself, Matcha thought, "This dude sure is handsome and powerful. I've got to imprint on him the idea that he can never, ever defeat me and must always live in my shadow. This way, he would never entertain the thought of opposing me in the future."

Chapter 487: Compensation

Cheese glared up at Matcha, unblinking. It looked like he was committing to memory the stupid, fat cat whom was stepping all over his face with his filthy paws.

Roly Poly was rounding up Kimchi and the remaining supercats. He kicked the ones that he passed, shouting, “Get up. Stop pretending that you’re dead. Gather round now.”

He then rudely perched a hind leg on one of the cats’ waist.

“What are you looking at?” he spat at Kimchi, whose eyes were burning with rage, “Keep it up and I’ll have you sterilized.

Kimchi continued to stare back at him defiantly. It was awfully tempting to fight back, but he did not dare to in the presence of the man that defeated Cat Sage.

In no time, Cheese, Kimchi, and the ring of cats that ruled the island were brought before Zhao Yao. Sphinx Cat and Ares managed to wrangle the rest of them in batches soon after.

While his cats diligently gathered all of the inhabitants here, Zhao Yao turned his attention to Xiao Yu. Fish Ball, Noodle, and Nekomata surrounded her. The two cats were rubbing lovingly against her calves. The husky was by her feet. He had rolled on his back, sticking out his tongue through a silly, open-mouthed grin.

“Oh, Xiao Yu! That husky is a monster!” Fish Ball cried out.

He squeezed his eyes shut as tightly as he could, releasing a small amount of tears.

“He... He actually... He actually forced me to..,” he bawled, “He is a savage.”

He was too overcome with emotion to continue speaking. He sobbed loudly, punctuating each snivel with a convulsive gasp.

Nekomata could not help but roll his eyes, “How...subtle.”

Regardless, he diligently typed all of Fish Ball’s words into his smartphone, then passed it to Xiao Yu. After listening to Fish Ball’s story using the text-to-speech function, she scooped him into her arms.

“What has he done to you?” she asked curiously.

There was a glint of excitement in her eyes.

“He... He eats poo! As if that was not enough, he forced me to eat poo too!” Fish Ball wept.

Noodle was quick to defend himself.

“How dare you accuse me of such falsehoods?! That was curry! Just curry!”

Like before, Nekomata transcribed the exchange on his phone. This time, Xiao Yu dropped Fish Ball onto the ground after she listened to their conversation. She cast a dirty look at Fish Ball and Noodle, then ran to Zhao Yao.

“Zhao Yao, let’s trade cats! I’ll give you Fish Ball and Noodle in exchange for one of your cats,” she proposed, beaming up at him adorably.

She held onto his arm and swung it from left to right, trying to get his attention.

Zhao Yao was completely unmoved.

“No thanks,” he replied, “I already have a few torchlights back home.”

Xiao Yu narrowed her eyes at him.

In the meantime, Noodle was glaring at her. He was feeling so frustrated that he had taken to rolling around aimlessly on the ground.

“Who does that imp think he is, slandering me like that!” he thought angrily, “Darn it! Where has all my power gone? What has changed? What am I missing?”

With that, he started to recall the series of events that had brought him to this point.

Behind him, Sphynx Cat and Ares could be seen darting in and out of view, bringing with them new cats with each appearance. They worked quickly. The dual effect of Sphynx Cat’s strength and

powers of perception was unbelievable. They combed the island in a matter of minutes, tracking down supercats that were hidden in every corner. Then, he would uproot whole houses from the ground and just lug them straight here.

When all the inhabitants of the island had been assembled, Zhao Yao turned to Cheese.

“You’re the cat who took Rice Cake, aren’t you?” he asked, stroking Cat Sage, whom was still struggling against his arms, “You’ve caused me quite a bit of trouble by doing that. How are you going to compensate me?”

Cheese and his friends were at a loss for words.

Cat Sage, however, had a lot to say about this.

“Human, we will never yield! You may have control of our bodies for now, but you’ll never win our allegiance!”

“That’s quite alright,” Zhao Yao chuckled, “I’m not interested in your allegiance. All I want is my compensation.”

Cat Sage’s eyes grew round as marbles.

“You understand me?” he asked in disbelief.

Oh crap.

He had only put on a tough act and spewed all that trash talk because he assumed the man would not understand a word.

“Well, of course I can. Why else would I be talking to you?” Zhao Yao responded casually.

He casually steered the conversation back to the topic at hand, “By stealing my cat, you’ve disrupted my work and caused me great emotional and mental distress. You’ll have to compensate me for all of that, plus transportation, medical expenses, home remodeling costs, and 108 other items.”

This time, even Cat Sage was stunned into silence.

“Will you let us go if we pay you back?” he asked.

“Of course,” Zhao Yao smiled, flashing his pearly whites, “I, Zhao Yao, am a man of my word. As long as you compensate me for all the damage you’ve caused, you’re free to go.”

The supercats glanced at each other. They could not conceal the look of pleasant surprise on their faces. They had assumed that they would be enslaved by this man forever.

Roly Poly sighed as he watched the ring of cats fall into the same trap that he once had.

“I used to be as naive as they were. I thought that I’ll be off the hook one day. But once you’re on Zhao Yao’s blacklist, you’re never going back,” he mused.

Cat Sage spoke up first, “So how much do we owe you?”

Zhao Yao took a moment to think about it.

“Well, let’s make it a billion RMB.”

Cat Sage startled.

“One billion?! How can it be one billion?!”

Zhao Yao waved a hand to sweep Rice Cake towards them with the deflective field.

“Look,” he said, motioning to the lifeless cat floating before them, “Look at the terrible state she’s in. It’s all thanks to you.”

“But..,” Cat Sage began, eyeing the desolate, little cat, “We’ve not done anything to her.”

“Yes, you have. This is emotional damage. You’ve destroyed a young kitten’s emotional well-being. She might never be the same again,” Zhao Yao explained, “Rice Cake is like a daughter to me. You’ve reduced my daughter to a lunatic. Do you know how much that has hurt her? Do you know how much pain you have caused me?”

Matcha jumped in and added, “Rice Cake is Zhao Yao’s most beloved cat. You have no idea how much he suffered when she went missing. Every day, he would wake with tears streaming down his face. He could not eat, drink, or even pee...”

Matcha knew that once Zhao Yao was done here, his head would be next on the chopping board. He had to find ways to lighten his punishment somehow.

“Yes, yes,” Zhao Yao said impatiently, brushing Matcha away, “That’s enough. I don’t need you to share some sob story here.”

“So..,” Cat Sage muttered.

“So,” Zhao Yao continued, “To be frank, you deserve to be minced into bits for what you’ve done to Rice Cake. However, I can’t bear to do that. You are Rice Cake’s brother after all. Can you see the dilemma you’ve put me in?”

“He is in so much pain!” Matcha chipped in, putting his paw on Zhao Yao’s calf, “It hurts him to see Rice Cake like this. You might as well have stabbed him in the heart. He wishes he could take her place. He might not look like it, but he’s on the verge of a mental breakdown.”

Again, Zhao Yao nudged Matcha away his foot while speaking to him telepathically, “Alright, that’s enough. You’re overdoing it. Geez.”

Matcha batted his eyelids at him innocently.

“Zhao Yao, I was just trying to help,” he said fawningly.

It worked. Cat Sage was beginning to feel uneasy and a tad guilty about the little cat’s plight.

“But we really don’t have so much money,” he said honestly.

“Well, we can’t force you to give us money you don’t have,” Zhao Yao said fairly, “You’ll have to give us this island then.”

Cat Sage was flabbergasted.

“But... But this is our home! If we gave you the island, where would we live?”

Zhao Yao’s response was quick. “I’ll rent it to you. You poor things look strapped for cash, so I’ll allow you to stay here for free temporarily.”

Cat Sage did not respond. He was still trying to make sense of everything that was happening.

Matcha called out to him, “You should thank Zhao Yao for letting you stay here rent-free. Do you know how expensive rent is now? He’s doing all of you a huge favor.”

Deep in his gut, Cat Sage felt that something was amiss here. However, being able to live on someone else’s property for free was a nice thing, no?

Hesitantly, he said, “Oh... Thank you.”

Chapter 488: An Island as Payment

Zhao Yao stroked the top of Cat Sage’s head.

“There’s no need to thank me,” he said, “I’m doing this because you guys are down on your luck right now. However, you do know that you shouldn’t stay on someone else’s property forever, yes?”

Cat Sage blinked up at him in surprise, “Then what should we do?”

“Work for me. I’ll give you wages. Save that up and you’ll be able to buy the island from me someday,” Zhao Yao responded.

He scratched the bottom of the cat's chin. It felt nice, but Cat Sage wrenched his head from the man's fingers.

He looked him in the eye, "We can buy the island back?"

Zhao Yao nodded.

"Of course. I'm not a slavedriver. You will be compensated fairly for your work. I will take care of your food and lodging. You won't have to spend a cent that I pay you at the end of each month. I'll keep that money safe for you so you can accumulate the funds you need to buy the island."

Matcha decided to interrupt the conversation at this point.

"Did you hear that? You guys have got it good! We do back-breaking work every day and all we might get at the end of it is a cafe. You are promised a friggin' island!" he exclaimed in mock outrage.

Cat Sage found himself lowering his head in embarrassment at his words.

"That doesn't seem too fair," he murmured.

"You took the words right out of my mouth!" Matcha agreed, "Zhao Yao, you're being too generous to them. We, your original supercats, are not happy about this at all!"

While he spoke out defiantly in public, he was also communicating with Zhao Yao telepathically.

"Zhao Yao, how am I doing?" Matcha asked earnestly.

"Beautifully," Zhao Yao responded.

Then, he kept up with the act.

“Matcha, look at these poor cats here. They’ve led a wretched life. They don’t get to eat or sleep well like you do in these horrible, sun-beaten conditions. You are all cats. Don’t you want to help them?”

Zhao Yao put on his most righteous expression and turned his gaze back to Cat Sage.

“I’m entrusting my cat island to you,” he said seriously, “Help me take good care of it. I hope that, one day, I can transform it into a supercat wonderland. It will be home to the homeless and family to the kinless.”

His words moved Cat Sage, whom was now looking up at him in awe.

“I understand,” the cat said solemnly, “Don’t worry. We will keep this island safe!”

Zhao Yao nodded in delight.

He glanced at the mission panel to see that his mission to cat thieves pay had been completed. With that, he had bagged 2,000*2 experience points.

“Hehe. It’s been a day well-spent. I guess that means that I now have...”

When he looked at the panel again, the Book was at Level 6 (42,262 / 20,000).

He was shaken out of his thoughts when the ground beneath his feet began to tremble.

He had forgotten about poor, little Rice Cake.

In an instant, he grabbed her and dumped her into the extradimensional belly.

The moment she was back in the familiar space, the light in her eyes began to return.

“I feel it,” Rice Cake whispered, “I feel the power of wifi.”

Her limp and lifeless body was revitalized all of a sudden. She scrambled onto her paws and bounced towards the nearest computer in joy.

Gaia was seated next to her. He smelt foul and greasy, as if he had not cleaned himself in weeks. She spotted open cans of half-eaten cat food scattered all over his desk. Gaia did not seem to notice her. His beady eyes were glued to the screen.

“What are you playing?” Rice Cake asked, peering at his screen as well.

Gaia did not bother turning to her to respond, “Dungeon Fighter Online.”

“Is it fun?”

A pained expression flashed past Gaia’s face.

“My advice is that you should steer clear of it. All it takes is a few minutes and you’ll never be able to stop. You’ll be a goner like me. All the cats here think I’m paralyzed. The truth is that I’ve not moved in so long that I’ve lost all the strength in my legs.”

Back in the real world, Zhao Yao had one last quest to deal with.

His eyes landed on Xiao Yu, who was still berating Fish Ball and Noodle.

“Xiao Yu,” he called out, “Come here.”

Sidequest: Help Xiao Yu find Noodle and Fish Ball!

Objective: Help Xiao Yu find her beloved pets, apprehend the cat thieves, and make them apologize for what they had done, especially to Xiao Yu.

Reward: 1,000 experience points

Punishment: None

“Alright, everyone,” he shouted over the crowd of supercats that were gathered around him, “You’ve stolen her cat and dog from her and brought them to this island. That was not a nice thing to do. You should apologize.”

Cat Sage led the rest of the cats to prostrate before the little girl. They apologized sincerely in unison. Of course, all Xiao Yu could hear was a cacophony of meows.

“Good. Good. See, they’ve said that they’re sorry,” Zhao Yao motioned towards the cats, whom were lying face-first on the ground.

He was chuffed that he had just bagged another 1,000*2 experience points.

Xiao Yu, however, was not satisfied.

She quirked an eyebrow and said, “That’s it? An apology? They stole my cat and dog. Shouldn’t they compensate me for my losses?”

Xiao Yu could not understand the language of cats, so she had no idea that Zhao Yao had already struck up a deal with Cat Sage. She did not know that the poor cats had already been tricked into giving up the island as payment.

Sighing, Zhao Yao stuck a hand into his pocket and fished around for something. A long while later, he managed to procure a crumpled two-dollar note and handed it to Xiao Yu.

The girl took the money, then threw it to the ground in a fit of rage.

“Two dollars?! Who wants that? I can’t even buy a crepe from the street vendor outside my school with two dollars! Even primary school students are richer than you!” she screeched.

“Oh, come on,” Zhao Yao sighed again, “Look at these cats. Look at the shabby grass huts they’re living in. Do you think they have money secretly stashed away to compensate you with? Even getting enough food and water is a challenge for them.”

Xiao Yu pursed her lips as she eyed the cats gathered around her feet.

She seemed to be mulling over something before finally speaking, “Fine. I’ll let them off the hook this time. What are we going to do about the island? Do we allow them to continue living here? The government is going to confiscate this place, isn’t it?”

Zhao Yao smiled.

“Well, I think it shouldn’t be too difficult to stop that from happening.”

With that, he whipped out his phone and dialed Inspector Ho’s number. It only took a couple rings before it was picked up.

“Zhao Yao?” the inspector sounded pleasantly surprised, “How’s it going? Is everything settled?”

“Yep, it’s done,” Zhao Yao responded, “I’ll send all the trespassers your way later on. Among them are two Americans from Star Cats.”

Inspector Ho’s tone turned serious, “There are apostles from Star Cats?”

Zhao Yao did not bother affirming this. Instead, he jumped right in and said, “One more thing, I want the island.”

“What?”

“Consider this a favor for an old friend. I want the island and the supercats that inhabit it.”

“Wait a minute!” Inspector Ho cried, “I don’t own the bloody island! I can’t just give it to you...”

Zhao Yao cut him off, “I’ll give you a superweapon. Anyone who puts it on will be able to use its power. As long as you “loan” me this island, the weapon will be yours. It’s an abandoned island anyway. It’s a good deal.”

“Just wait, Zhao Yao. I can’t just make this decision by myself. I need to call for a meeting...”

Once again, the inspector was interrupted by Zhao Yao, whom had hung up unceremoniously. Inspector Ho rubbed the top of his bald head in frustration.

“God! He just doesn’t give a s**t, does he?”

An exasperated sigh left his lips when he received an incoming message. His eyes lit up after he glossed through its contents.

“Huh? When did he create something like that? But wow...”

The message described the superweapon that Zhao Yao would give him in exchange for the island. It was called the Weapon of Illusion. It empowered its user to conjure visual and auditory illusions that affected all beings within a 100-meter radius.

This was one of Zhao Yao’s illusion seals. He could make three new ones each week, so he basically had an endless supply of them. He did not mind handing one to the authorities. The seal was not particularly precious to him, but it would be a treasure to them.

Of course, he did not want to arm them with too much power either. This was why he designed the seal to only be able to deprive an opponent of two senses and not all five of them.

Regardless, it was still immensely powerful. Used right, it could wipe out 99% of all supercats and apostles in an instant.

The one inconvenience was that Zhao Yao had to charge it once a week.

Chapter 489: Meteorite Intelligence

Zhao Yao hung up and turned to Xiao Yu.

“It’s done,” he stated, “From today, this island is officially mine.”

There was skepticism written all over her face when she looked at him.

“Oh really? The government gave you the island just like that? Zhao Yao, are you trying to trick a child right now?”

“I honestly do not care if you believe me or not,” he said casually, “Hey, you’re not done with winter break homework, are you? School starts tomorrow. You have better things to do than gallivant out here. Go home and finish your assignments.”

He cast a severe look at Xiao Yu, then pushed her, Fish Ball, Noodle, and Nekomata through the dimension doorway. This led them into the extradimensional belly, where they fell through another doorway and ended up in the cat cafe.

“No!” Xiao Yu cried.

She had not want to return to the real world. She grabbed onto Zhao Yao’s hand to catch his attention.

“It’s exactly because school is starting tomorrow that I can’t waste my remaining freedom on homework!” she whined, “It’s the last day of winter break! I want to stay out and play until the very last minute! Noodle and Fish Ball will help me with my assignments! I don’t have to go home!”

Xiao Yu batted her eyelashes at him as she continued, “That was a beautiful island! There’s sun, sand, and the ocean! Just let me stay there a while more? And help me take some photos?”

Seeing that Zhao Yao did not budge, she engaged in a more aggressive approach.

“I’ll wear a nice swimsuit. I’ll even invite a few friends. They’re the prettiest girls at my school. Guys at your age idolize high school girls, no?”

Zhao Yao let out a bark of exasperated laughter.

“Not interested,” he stated, throwing her a dirty look.

“It’s up to you if you want to do your homework,” he continued, “You can go play wherever you want except on my island. I have big renovation plans for it. You’re not allowed there.”

With that, he took one step back and disappeared into the portal. Xiao Yu rushed forward, hoping to steal inside as well, but she fell through thin air instead. She glared at the spot where Zhao Yao disappeared.

Now that Xiao Yu was safely back in the city, Zhao Yao could focus his attention on William.

At this point, Old Cat had successfully brainwashed William and convinced him to divulge every bit of intelligence he had about the meteorite. Zhao Yao did not ask the cat to reiterate everything that he had heard. That was a risky move. As long as Old Cat had a chance to talk, he had a chance to attack. Instead, Zhao Yao chose to hear straight from the horse's mouth and made William repeat everything he had shared.

William said that the meteorite that crashed onto Earth was the cause of the supercat awakening. It had crossed the globe before finally landing in Maine, USA. However, that did not mean that the whole meteorite could be found there. It had gradually broken into pieces as it journeyed through the atmosphere, scattering meteorite fragments around the world. The thing that ended up in Maine was the largest of these fragments.

The theory William subscribed to was that the fragments could intensify a supercat's abilities. This was why the ones in Maine were particularly powerful. The radiation from the fragment bounced onto them, strengthening them day by day and pushing them to evolve into unexpected, new levels. It had reached a point where supercats had entered the public service. Some of them had successfully climbed up the ladder and had fought for equal speaking and voting rights as their human counterparts.

With this new arrangement came the genesis of Star Cats. It was an organization in which the American government and free supercats worked together to manage global catastrophes and to conduct research on the meteorite.

Zhao Yao narrowed his eyes as he took in all this information.

"How far have you come in terms of meteorite and supercat research?" he asked.

William shrugged, "I'm just a nobody. I don't know much."

"Tell me whatever you know."

“Well, there are a few trump cards, or rather, trump cats, in my organization,” William began, “The government uses the fragment to strengthen them. They grow and evolve continuously. Even though there are apostles who borrow their abilities, no one really knows the true depths of their powers.”

Zhao Yao nodded impatiently. It was expected that they would use the fragment to bolster their best cats.

“What else?” he prompted.

A deep groove settled between William’s eyebrows as he racked his brain for more details.

“I’ve heard some stories. There was talk that they hoped to breed supercats, clone them, and somehow replicate the power of the fragment to accelerate the evolution of the cats. I’m not sure if there’s any truth to them.”

Zhao Yao continued to probe him, but it quickly became clear that William did not know much more.

He ended the interrogation with one final question, “Is there anything else you would like to add? You do have a partner here on the island. If what you tell me does not match what he says, there will be trouble.”

William hesitated for a moment before speaking, “I’m not lying to you. Everything I’ve told you is true. We’re just low-level officers. We don’t know much.”

After an intense brainwashing session with Old Cat, it was close to impossible for him to lie. However, Zhao Yao’s threat did seem to remind him of something he missed out. There was another crinkle between his brows when he added, “Oh, there is one more thing I’ve heard. It’s quite far-fetched, so I doubt it’s anything more than a rumor.”

“Oh?” Zhao Yao was curious and itching to know more, “What rumor? Pray tell.”

There was another pause before William continued, “A colleague told me that there was an, erm, incident in the research facility. An alien escaped.”

“Huh? An alien?”

William nodded earnestly, “Yes. I heard that the government managed to extract an alien from the big fragment that landed in Maine, but I think it is absolutely ridiculous. There have been so many stories about aliens in Area 51 for decades too, no?”

Zhao Yao shrugged. “Perhaps.”

In the next moment, William had been robbed of all five senses and had fallen to the ground, unconscious.

Zhao Yao called for Diana and Caesar, whom appeared quickly.

“Erase his memories from the past 24 hours,” he ordered.

After that, he got Old Cat to brainwash William’s colleague, whom became honest and compliant, but did not offer any new information. The man had his memory erased as well.

“As I suspected, America has been actively regulating and developing superpowers too. I hope we aren’t too far behind?” Zhao Yao mused, scratching the bottom of his chin.

The things he heard were a little unsettling.

He was fairly confident that he was one of the strongest apostles in the world. However, there was no way that he could take down an entire country, much less one that had the latest military technology and a substantial number of meteorite fragments.

The dimension doorways were the ultimate defence and served as the perfect escape, but they were not indestructible.

“If I want to get my hands on all the fragments, I might have to fight the American government. I really need more horsepower for that.”

He was not ready, but that was okay. Collecting the fragments was no simple task. It would take time and preparation. For now, Zhao Yao would focus on tying up all loose ends on the island and eventually transform it into his personal, portable basecamp with the help of a dimension doorway.

One of those final loose strings included freeing the two Americans and the rest of the stranded individuals from the island. This rescue mission earned him 520 * 2 experience points.

With that, the mission panel became:

Book: Level 6 (45,302 / 10,000)

Matcha: Level 7 (4,700 / 20,000)

Elizabeth: Level 6 (4,200 / 10,000)

Dust Ball: Level 8 (6,355 / 50,000)

Ares: Level 6 (5,400 / 10,000)

Lucifer: Level 6 (2,900 / 10,000)

Sphinx Cat: Level 6 (300 / 10,000)

“Oh right, there’ll be the end-of-month tally tonight. There’s going to be an influx of experience points. Looks like I can level up a few cats at once.”

Zhao Yao nodded his head smugly. Right now, he was feeling fairly confident about his upcoming mission to fight Star Cats so that he can collect all the meteorite fragments.

Chapter 490: The Six Departments

The reorganization of the island finally began after dispatching the annoying humans. The first task on Zhao Yao’s agenda was to gather every single cat from both the island and his extradimensional belly.

Currently, the cats assembled here could be divided into three large groups. Firstly, there were the aboriginals, led by Cat Sage.

Next, there were Matcha, Roly Poly, Elizabeth, Ares and the rest. They were the pioneering batch of supercats under Zhao Yao's charge.

Finally, the last group comprised of cats Zhao Yao had rescued from the evil clutches of Mao Gang.

The number of cats was mind-blowing. There were at least 160 cats under Zhao Yao's care. Currently, they had all congregated on this island for an important meeting. However, it was utter chaos. Some of them were rolling around while others were chasing one another across the island. Some even huddled together as they licked each other's fur. It was like a giant market. You couldn't even hear your own thoughts from all that noise.

Previously, Cat Sage had divided the island into 5 separate departments: plantation department, furball department, fishing department, hunting department and waste removal department. Zhao Yao was rather impressed by the management system. Hence, he decided to tweak it before calling it his own by introducing his own cats as the department heads.

"Matcha, please take a step forward." Zhao Yao's head cocked towards that meaty cat and pondered, "Even though he's somewhat responsible for this entire saga, Cheese was the one responsible for all the damages back home. Those who stole my cats came from this island. Hence, Matcha's not totally at fault."

Matcha sauntered forward with an air of superiority surrounding him. Zhao Yao continued, "From now on, you are responsible for the royal cat guards. You have the power to handpick and form your elite force to monitor the masses. Report straight to me if you face any problems."

"Hmph, don't tell me Zhao Yao actually forgot about what I had done? I mean it's only normal for him to overlook that when all I did was just malingering. How can such an insignificant matter compromise his love and affection for me?"

Matcha's body began to quiver as he had trouble suppressing his laughter, "Meowhaha, I knew it! I'm truly Zhao Yao's favorite cat! Once I have my royal cat guards behind me, I'll torture Roly Poly to the brink of death!"

However, Zhao Yao tilted his head and relayed his next instruction in Roly Poly's direction, "Roly Poly, you will be in charge of the royal cat police force. You too can pick any cats from the island.

From now on, you shall monitor all inhabitants on the island, including Matcha and his royal cat guards. Report to me if you detect any anomalous behavior.”

Matcha could not believe his ears, “What? Roly Poly, that fellow ...” He turned his head around and noticed Roly Poly staring straight at him. Their line of sight collided with each other as invisible fireworks erupted in the air.

Zhao Yao gave an approving nod of his head and thought, “This is a cat for a cat. Even though both of them had committed serious felonies, they are still good cats at the end of the day. Also, their past mistakes had made them extra cautious since their previous punishments. Now, both of them will have their eyes peeled for each other’s action, ensuring no one oversteps their boundary. In this case, a cat coup can definitely be prevented.”

He then directed his attention towards Elizabeth, “Elizabeth, you are responsible for the cat café. Simply put, your job is to improve our sales figure.”

Cat café was the perfect source of experience points in the long run. Naturally, Zhao Yao had no intentions to give it up. He intended to erect the extradimensional gates in the café, apartment, and the island, saving transportation time.

Elizabeth slid the remaining cats a condescending glare before mumbling, “This bunch of good-for-nothings. No wonder Zhao Yao has to depend on me to ensure the survival of the café.”

The remaining female cats responded to that obnoxious claim by shooting a death glare straight at Elizabeth. It was as if they were trying to kill her with their stares.

However, the male cats responded totally differently to Elizabeth. Some had saliva dripping down their lips while others stood with their tails erected. Some were even grinding their bodies against the ground.

Cat Sage was one of the horny cats with his tail erected. His eyes were fixed on Elizabeth as he thought, “Interesting, you have successfully attracted my attention.”

Zhao Yao laughed along to Elizabeth’s words, “Be a good girl, Elizabeth. In a café, there’s bound to be the ugly and the beautiful. We need all sorts of cats for the café to prosper.” He noticed the flames of determination burning brightly in their eyes and continued to nod his head approvingly.

Next, he glanced at Dust Ball and announced, “Dust Ball, you are in charge of the plantation department. You can plant whatever you want on any part of the island and the demarcated area inside the belly.”

“Yes!” Dust Ball screamed as excitement raced through her.

Finally, Zhao Yao raised the cat, Cat Sage, cradled in his arms and declared, “Sage, I need you to continue your leadership in maintaining the security. You can pick any cats you have in mind. Basically, just ensure that this island is safe. By the way, who is the one who created that fog?”

Kimchi jumped to his feet and answered, “Me! I’m the one who did it! I can control the weather!”

“Good, I want you to maintain it. However, you can reduce the scale of it. I just don’t want the outside world to see what is going on in our island.”

Zhao Yao stroked his chin and continued, “Ares, Sphynx Cat, both of you are in charge of the cat warriors department. One of you must be inside cat nation at any time, in order to support my battles beyond our land.”

“Oh yes, I almost forgot about them.” Zhao Yao stretched open his mouth as Matsuo and Faceless slid out of it. He then transported Baiquan from the café over to the island.

Baiquan was shocked to see the sheer number of cats scattered across, “Boss, where did you get all these cats from? Are you really thinking of creating a stray cat relief center?”

Zhao Yao waved his arm and responded, “These are no ordinary cats. All of them are supercats. From today onwards, you are the leader of the logistics department. Matsuo and Faceless over here shall assist you. The three of you are responsible for what they eat, drink, shit and piss.”

Nodding his head, Zhao Yao remarked, “Royal cat guards, royal cat police force, cat café, plantation department, security force, cat warriors. I guess these six departments shall suffice temporarily. You can begin by selecting your members. Of course, all cats are given the option to remain unaffiliated. However, you won’t receive a monthly wage if you choose to do so.”

Immediately, the leaders scrambled to assemble their A team. Zhao Yao brought the logistics department out to source for logistics required. They still had to construct cottages, electric grids and provide stable internet coverage for their inhabitants.

Old Cat dashed towards Matcha's side as both of them slid each other a sly smile.

Seeing the cats gravitating towards their side, Old Cat whipped out his phone and initialized the voice function. His two words restriction was still in play. Hence, he only dared to exceed it when chatting with Matcha.

"All of you, get in lines. If you wanna be a part of the elite royal cat guards, join us."

The first cat in line was an orange cat, Airplane, who had followed them since the days of Jiangmen University

Airplane greeted Matcha with a wide smile and exclaimed, "Good morning, sir!"

Matcha nodded his head smugly and asked, "Why do you want to join us?"

"For honor and glory!" Airplane responded with no hesitation, "The strongest, coolest cat amongst all six departments is none other than you, Sir George! I will only follow the strongest and coolest!"

These stupid words were music to Matcha's ears as he replied, "Great eyes, you have! You're selected! Next!"

"What do you specialize in?"

"Sir George, I have attained the Master rank in Mobile Legends!"

"You are selected."

The recruitment process for the royal cat guards went without a hitch. However, Zhao Yao selected purely based on personal preference. Hence, most of them were simply shameless and useless individuals. They were either sycophants or experts in Mobile Legends.

Meanwhile, Roly Poly's selection was far more stringent.

With their details reflected on his phone's screen, Roly Poly read, "Let me see, Caesar, ragdoll, three years old, graduated from XXX ragdoll cattery, a pedigree. Hmph, tell me about your family background."

Caesar answered, "I have a wife and two daughters."

Nodding his head, Roly Poly enquired, "What are your interests and hobbies?"

"I love to watch movies. I have basically watched every single Oscar-winning movie."

A line etched between Roly Poly's brows as he typed on his phone, "Too lazy for his own good." He continued, "Why did you suddenly decide to leave your previous job and join us the royal cat police force?"

"My previous working conditions were horrible! My boss was a crazy woman! I almost lost my life because of her. Thankfully for Master Zhao Yao, I managed to live on and recently transferred over to this island."

Roly Poly sighed, "That's all, we have a good understanding of your situation. You will be notified if you're recruited."

Caesar craned his neck and asked, "Roly Poly, I'm recruited, right? Do you remember that we took an oath to become ... sworn brothers?"

Roly Poly pinned him down with a vicious glare, "Do not resort to such unscrupulous means. I, Roly Poly, absolutely abhor those who use such methods. I do not compromise on fairness and equality. You have found the wrong guy."

Roly Poly called for the next cat after dispatching the despondent Caesar.

Meanwhile, the captain of the plantation department, Dust Ball, had disappeared into the woods. She had purposely avoided everyone as she leaped onto a branch, with her eyes set on the vast plains.

"Hmph, no one will take away the catmint from me! Everything belongs to me! No one else!"

