

My Iyashikei Game

Chapter 3: 3

Some people played games to while away time, others played games to stomp over plebs, while Han Fei started this game because he was promised a relaxing experience but now, he felt even more under duress. Putting away the mop, Han Fei looked around. Han Fei scanned his surroundings. The lights in the room flickered on and off, the feeling of familial warmth had disappeared without a trace. He sidled to the side of the refrigerator. Earlier, the old woman only opened the upper section, which was the freezer. This meant that Han Fei had no idea what kind of surprise was waiting for him in the lower section.

The old lady's refrigerator was not large enough to fit a whole person inside, unless of course...

Han Fei took a deep breath as he slowly opened the lower section of the refrigerator. He pulled open the individual fridge drawers and realized they were all stuffed with bulging black plastic bags. He encountered similar plots in horror movies before but watching them on screen and living inside one were two completely different experiences. His fingers reached into the drawer. Han Fei was worried that he'd be greeted by human faces or hair. With a tingle of his Adam's Apple, Han Fei used his fingernails to scratch through the thin black plastic. They were filled with frozen fish and poultry. The horrendous images that he anticipated did not appear. Han Fei sighed in quiet relief. He quickly closed the refrigerator before the granny returned.

"What are you doing?" Right at that moment, a throaty voice erupted behind him. Han Fei felt an involuntarily chill slither up his spine. 'My Lord, how did she manage to move without making any noise?!' Han Fei surreptitiously reached for the mop as he turned around. After all, the man was a professional actor. He soon managed to arrange his facial expression. "I was just trying to help clean up. There was some accumulated water under the refrigerator. I suspected it was due to water leakage from the chiller caused by the electricity shortage."

The old lady's expression remained the same. She always presented the same kind and welcoming smile to him but the longer he stared at her, the more discomfited he felt. It was as if this was the only expression she knew how to make. "Granny, like you said, I've been staying away from home for quite some time already. Thank you for giving me a chance to join your family's holiday celebration." Han Fei very naturally started to mop the floor. "We'll be neighbours from now on so please do not hesitate to come find me if you run into any trouble." Despite his suspicion, Han Fei had to act like he was none the wiser.

Han Fei cleaned up the living room nicely. He noticed the old lady had trouble with her legs. She had trouble moving, so how did she manage the ghost-like movement earlier? "In any case, it's getting late. You should go rest. I won't bother you any further." As he made to leave, the robotic voice rang in his mind again, "Notification for Player 0000! Your kind gestures have left a good impression on Meng Si. Friendliness with Meng Si increases by 5. Forming a peaceful neighbourly relationship is the first step to a perfect life."

While his attention was distracted by the system notification, the old lady had materialized behind Han Fei. "I intended to tell you this during dinner but I doubt you'll be coming back any time soon. You're a good kid and granny wishes to have you as a neighbour but I need to tell you this... Don't stay because of the cheap rental, move away as soon as you can. There have been some incidents that happened in that house of yours."

"What kind of incidents?"

"It's best that you don't know too much. Just remember this. You have to lock the door to your bathroom before you go to sleep at night." The old lady then turned to head back to her kitchen as if she had lost interest in the conversation. Soon a strange sound came from the kitchen, following it was the delicious and heavy smell of meat. Han Fei took that as his cue to leave and leave he did. After he left the granny's front door, his heart finally settled back into place. "Something does not seem right with this game."

To be fair, Han Fei did not find any chopped body parts inside the old lady's refrigerator but many suspicious details stood out to him. For example, when he arrived, the old lady told him her house's fuse was burnt. Suppose the fuse was of good quality, the only reason for a burnt fuse was power overload. However, when Han Fei cleaned the old lady's house earlier, he took a silent inventory of the kitchen and living room. He noted only 3 electrical appliances, the television, the lamp and the refrigerator. These few appliances wouldn't have burnt the fuse so the only explanation was, there were other electrical appliances hidden away from view.

"The boy's bedroom was locked, why would the old lady lock her grandson up? Is it because she was afraid the boy might accidentally say something to me? Or could there be a second refrigerator inside the boy's bedroom?" The thought of the boy sleeping with dead bodies caused Han Fei to shiver. He turned to look down the eerie-looking corridor. There appeared to be eyes watching him from behind every closed door. "How come the place suddenly feels so creepy?"

Han Fei hurried back to his own home. He tried many different keys on the ring before he found the correct one. Han Fei rushed into the safety of his house. Looking at the empty living room, he took in deep breaths. "Am I being paranoid? Somehow, this lyashikei game plays more like a Resident Evil game to me."

After pouring himself a glass of water, Han Fei paced around the room. The parting words from the old lady circulated in his mind like an evil mantra. “It’s best that you don’t know too much. Just remember this. You have to lock the door to your bathroom before you go to sleep at night....”

Han Fei reassessed his surroundings. The house had seen better days but during this closer examination, a strange detail jumped out at Han Fei. Other than the window in the bathroom, every single window inside this house was covered behind a thick, opaque curtain.

Approaching one of the windows, Han Fei pulled back a corner of the curtain. The window underneath the curtain was boarded up. Han Fei looked through the wooden gap and saw a dim city. The gaming world was enormous, the darkness that enveloped it stretched down the horizon.

“Where are the promised warm scenarios and relaxing background music?” Han Fei lowered back the curtain. Han Fei realized the online reviews he found might be incomplete. The game probably featured some elements that were not advertised or picked up by others. “Or I’m playing the game the wrong way?”

In terms of sound quality, visual effect, and interactivity, this game was definitely the best game Han Fei had played. In fact, it surpassed every one of his expectations... But somehow, everything in this game felt a bit too real.

Sitting on the couch, Han Fei closed his eyes. Two windows floated in his mind. One was his character profile and the other was the mission interface.

After he helped the old lady with the fuse, the mission interface was triggered. The voice did say that completing the new player missions would help him understand the gaming world better. With that in mind, Han Fei clicked open the mission interface. Studying the three new player missions, his face scrunched up in confusion.

New Player Mission 1: Take a shower

New Player Mission 2: Watch a television show

New Player Mission 3: Sleep

The missions were so simple that it was ridiculous. They had no extra explanation because they did not require any.

‘Should I start with sleeping? I’m quite good at it.’ There was reasoning behind Han Fei’s decision. There was mention of sleeping in the old lady’s ominous warning so it might be key to helping him complete this seemingly simple mission. Compared to selecting a random one, Han Fei figured he might as well pick one that was presented to him, albeit indirectly.

'I'm going to choose New Player Mission 3, sleep.' When this thought appeared in Han Fei's mind, the mission was chosen and the robotic voice returned. "Player 0000 has accepted Grade G New Player Mission, Sleep!"

"Mission introduction: After a whole day of work, you dragged your tired body to bed.

"Mission Requirement: Please close all the lights in the room and get into bed within the next 5 minutes. No matter what happens, you must not leave the bed in the subsequent 3 hours."

'Is it really that simple?' Han Fei double-checked the mission detail before he stood up to head into the bedroom. The king-sized bed was equally dirty with dust. However, it came complete with all the necessary bedding accoutrements like pillows, bedspreads and coverlets. It was worth noting that everything was red in color, which was synonymous with celebration in Chinese culture.

"With this color, this feels like a matrimonial bed." Han Fei frowned as he fluffed away the dust. Then he moved to the bathroom. Just as he prepared to follow the old lady's advice, he noticed a problem. The bathroom door could only be locked from the inside. After giving it some thought, Han Fei grabbed the mop and held it under the door handle. Then he moved the shoe rack to barricade against the door. 'This should be enough, right?'

For the sake of extra insurance, he went back to the kitchen to grab the cleaver. 'It's a bit weird sleeping in bed with a cleaver in an Iyashikei game, isn't it? O well, it's better to be safe than sorry.'

Seeing as the 5 minutes were about to run out, he ran to close all the light and crawled into bed with the cleaver in hand.