

My Iyashikei Game

Chapter 5: 5

The black shadow beside the couch materialized at the bedroom door. Han Fei could barely make out the shape of a person. It was squatting on the ground with its head lowered. Han Fei half knelt on the bed as if petrified. The mouldy long red cover draped over his back. 'If I'd known that this is an action game, I would have been much more prepared but the boss and the internet reviews all told me that this is supposed to be an Iyashikei game. Who the fuck would be prepared to escape for dear life in an Iyashikei game?!'

He stared transfixed at the bedroom door. His brain started to spin after a temporary shutdown. He was already caught in this conundrum so it was fruitless to blame the game. He would have to survive within the given rules! To exit the game, he would have to satisfy two conditions: 1. Play the game for more than 3 hours. 2. Complete at least 1 mission.

'I have already completed the fuse mission at the granny's home. I remember when I first logged into the game, I saw the wall clock show that it was midnight. The last time I checked the bedroom clock, it was 2. 44 am, so technically I only need to survive for another 16 minutes and then I can get the hell away from this place!' Han Fei's brain had never worked so fast. Staring at the door, his muscles tensed and his fingers tightened around the cleaver handle. 'Based on my earlier inspection, there was no one inside the bathroom, and it is not large enough to hide anyone so what the hell is this thing? Hell, is this creature even the same one as the thing that escaped from the bathroom?'

Han Fei only needed to survive for another 16 minutes but the big question was, how? Things were certainly spiralling south. He could not tell whether the cleaver would work on these creatures or not, in fact, the cleaver was for his own comfort than anything else. He was told to lie in bed and then somehow, the bathroom door opened without explanation. After that, some unknown creature materialized in the living room before moving to block the bedroom door. This surely was one hell of an Iyashikei game!

'Calm down! I have to calm down!' The inability to quit the game shook Han Fei greatly. He was still reeling from it when the terror of the unknown pounced at him. Honestly, the fact that he was still conscious surprised even Han Fei himself. 'The old lady said that something has once happened in this house and it's wise to move away as soon as possible. She should be warning me about this creature on the ground. The fact that the other apartment houses are still occupied probably means that this thing rarely leaves this house so I should be safe if I am able to escape from this house.' But that was easier said than done. As Han Fei laid his eyes on the blurry shadow by the door, he lost all courage to move. 'No wait! There is still hope! If it stays over there by the door, I

will only need to stay here for another 16 minutes and everything will be over. But once it crawls in, I'll run out of the bedroom immediately!

That would fail his new player mission but now was not the time to care about that. Han Fei's eyes slowly moved to check the electric clock on the living room wall. Before he saw the time though, chilblains rose up his skin!

With his pupils narrowing, Han Fei looked to the bedroom door again. The squatting person had disappeared. At that moment, Han Fei made the wise decision to escape. He did not stay to switch on the light, or retreat to the bathroom or wait for the thing to get him. He jumped down from bed and raced towards the front door! He knew the thing had entered the bedroom, he was not going to wait in there like a sheep waiting for the butcher. Instead of finding out what the thing was, Han Fei valued his life more.

Every second was precious. Han Fei did not think he ever ran as fast as he did now. He rushed towards the anti-theft door and blasted through it. The commotion lit up the lights in the corridor. The dim light streamed into the house but Han Fei did not dare to turn around to look. He only chanced a glance back from the corner of his eyes as he raced towards the steps.

Inside the empty room, a person was contorted in an impossible angle under the bedroom light. If Han Fei had stopped to open the light, he'd come face to face with a bloodless visage!

As he ran forward, Han Fei closed the door behind him with a swing of his feet to put some distance between him and the thing. Perhaps the door might stop the thing from coming out, one never knows. However, soon Han Fei heard a spine-tingling sound coming from inside his house. It sounded like someone was scratching the door with their nails. 'The thing wishes to come out too? Can't things like that phase through walls?'

Well, Han Fei was not going to stay to find out. He grabbed his cleaver and raced down the stairs. Han Fei knew the granny was no friendly character either but compared to the unknown creature, the old lady seemed to pose a smaller threat.

Han Fei arrived at the third floor and the familiar smell of meat hit him again. He saw the old lady's door being left half open and there were several black plastic bags by the door. They were different from the ones he saw inside the refrigerator earlier. Taking a few steps back, Han Fei's back knocked into the door of another tenant. An already cracked Bagua mirror fell from the top of the door and it almost hit him. Turning back to look, Han Fei noticed the person's door was covered with talismans. That was definitely not a good sign.

'Is there not a normal person in this building? And why didn't I notice this earlier?'

The stream of endless stimuli pulled Han Fei's nerves taut. Right at that moment, all the voice-activated lights went off. He stomped loudly on the ground but the lights refused to come back on. In the deadly silence that followed, Han Fei could hear clearly the sound of the door being opened. Something was approaching him in the dark. His heart raced. Han Fei traced his way down the steps. He sensed the thing was chasing him. Gritting his teeth, Han Fei rushed all the way to the first floor. Then he realized with devastation the building entrance was locked, he was unable to leave this apartment building.

Han Fei tried to force the lock open with brute force. The cleaver chopped repeatedly at the lock. Eventually though a shadow loomed over him like something giant had stopped behind him. Something curled around his neck. Han Fei continued to chop at the lock like he was crazy but in reality, he was actually waiting for the exit button in the menu to light up. Chill seeped through his body. Slowly, energy left him and the cleaver dangled by his side weakly. Just as he was about to lose his consciousness, the button finally lit up.

The 3 hours were up!

"Exit now!"

Bang! A loud crash boomed in his mind. The world spun and pain gripped him. Resisting the pain, the moment Han Fei regained control of his body, he yanked the gaming helmet off his head and slammed it heavily on the table.

The projected monitor on the wall showed that it was already 3.01 am. Han Fei entered the game in the morning but when he exited, it was already past midnight. Fatigue bogged down on every inch of his body. A sense of surrealism overcame him. Since the gaming world was so similar to the real world, it felt as if he was still trapped inside the game.

"Notification for Player 0000! You have completed your first gaming experience inside the first edition of Perfect Life. Please do explore it further!" The cold robotic voice chimed deep inside his mind. Han Fei froze to the spot. He was sure that he had already removed the gaming helmet, so where did the voice come from... 'How is this possible?'

"Notification for Player 0000! You have completed your first gaming instance, please initiate your second gaming instance within the next 24 hours!"

'Why is this voice still in my head?' Han Fei touched the back of his head and he winced with pain. He picked up the heavy gaming and was shocked to see blood splattered inside the helmet. Thinking back, Han Fei remembered blurrily, there was something that was inserted into his head when he first put on the helmet.

'Wait, this is attempted murder, right?' Han Fei took out his phone to call the police but as he attempted to do so, the robotic voice said again, "Notification for Player 0000! Please do not reveal any gaming information to anyone else or the black box within your brain will explode and cerebral death will be certain in 0.001 second."

'Black box? Cerebral death?' Han Fei looked at the Iyashikei genre logo pasted on the side of the gaming helmet and he felt his headache intensifying.