

Ice Age 1091

Chapter 1091: Behind the Cockroach Swarm

Zhang Yi looked at the dying Chen Jingguan and frowned.

He took antidote and antibiotics from his Dimensional Space and rolled them over to the doctors on the ground.

The base doctors, seeing such good supplies, hurriedly took them to use on Chen Jingguan.

"How is it? Can you save his life?"

Zhang Yi inquired.

Several doctors were already busy and sweating profusely.

One doctor said with embarrassment, "We need to draw blood for testing. General Chen is infected with a very serious pathogen. But our base's medical level... is somewhat insufficient."

Zhang Yi rubbed his forehead. "Wait."

He turned and left, returning soon after with Zhou Ke'er.

Zhou Ke'er was already wearing medical equipment and walked over to Chen Jingguan's sickbed.

Her ability was now much stronger than before.

Her hands emitted a soft white light, which she gently swept over Chen Jingguan's body from above, like an X-ray, clearly examining the internal condition of his body.

"It is indeed a very serious pathogen infection."

She deftly administered medicine to Chen Jingguan. After a busy period, the black color on Chen Jingguan's face finally receded.

However, he looked terrifyingly weak, his face deathly pale.

After opening his eyes, he saw Zhang Yi and Zhou Ke'er and was immediately filled with shame.

"Boss, I'm sorry, I..."

He pursed his dry lips, not knowing what to say at this moment.

Zhang Yi looked down at him and asked calmly, "How did you end up in such a sorry state? Didn't I warn you to be careful of attacks by Mutated Creatures?"

"Even if I hadn't said it, after experiencing the zombie hordes in Tianhai City back then, haven't you learned anything?"

Chen Jingguan: "I..."

Zhang Yi turned to look at Lu Dahai not far away. Lu Dahai quickly bowed his head respectfully to Zhang Yi.

Zhang Yi said, "From now on, Dawn Rain Base will be temporarily handed over to Lu Dahai for management. Chen Jingguan is demoted to deputy. You should focus on recovering from your illness for now."

Lu Dahai couldn't contain his inner excitement and secretly clenched his fist.

He had finally waited for this opportunity!

The chance to become someone superior!

His two brothers, Rong Lei and Yu Gang, exchanged excited and gratified glances.

During the previous battle, they had also fought very bravely, precisely to not hold their brother back.

Now was the time for their reward.

Lu Dahai shouted loudly, "Yes, Mr. Zhang! I will definitely work hard!"

Zhang Yi said calmly, "It's only temporary. If you don't perform well, I'll replace you."

Lu Dahai was a superhuman, which was why Zhang Yi was supporting him.

But having combat power wasn't enough; he also needed management skills, and most importantly, loyalty to Zhang Yi.

He could give Lu Dahai a chance, but it also depended on whether Lu Dahai was the right material.

Lu Dahai quickly said, "I understand!"

Chen Jinguan, feeling guilty at this moment, even though he clearly knew Zhang Yi was deliberately promoting Lu Dahai, had no face to say anything.

Just then, Zhang Yi received reports from Xiao Honglian and Xing Tian.

It turned out that at the same time, their bases had also been attacked by cockroach swarms.

Zhang Yi asked, "How is the situation on your end?"

Xiao Honglian, wearing a red combat suit, stood on a high point of the factory. Below, the crisscrossing trenches were already a sea of fire.

The cockroaches were being burned to death in swathes, and the air was actually filled with a protein-like aroma.

Xiao Honglian smiled into the communication device, "With your warning, we made preparations early, so there haven't been any casualties."

Over at Qingpu Base, Xing Tian had also taken precautions in advance, so there were no major casualties.

Chen Jingguan, listening to this from his sickbed, felt even more ashamed.

Zhang Yi didn't blame him further at this time, simply calling Zhou Ke'er and leaving Dawn Rain Base.

He had said he wouldn't interfere too much in the operations of the three major bases.

They could handle their own affairs. Zhang Yi disliked wasting energy managing too many people.

Now it was up to Lu Dahai to see what he could do.

Zhang Yi took Zhou Ke'er back to the Shelter, took off his overcoat and threw it on the sofa, but a thoughtful look appeared in his eyes.

Zhou Ke'er helped Zhang Yi put away his coat, took off her own protective suit, revealing her curvaceous figure, and sat down next to Zhang Yi.

"Zhang Yi, what's wrong? Did you discover something?"

Zhang Yi nodded.

"I think it's a bit strange. This feeling is very similar to the zombie hordes in Tianhai City back then."

"The three major bases being attacked simultaneously is definitely not a coincidence. Either a highly intelligent king has emerged within the cockroach swarms to control them."

"Or someone is controlling the cockroach swarms to launch the attacks."

"Moreover, the fact that the Shelter here wasn't attacked is clearly not a coincidence either."

Zhou Ke'er said, "You mean, someone wants to deal with you?"

Zhang Yi raised an eyebrow slightly. "Who knows? Maybe yes, maybe no. I always tend to think about things from a complex angle, but I also easily overthink, complicating simple problems."

"Even now, I can't be completely sure."

Zhang Yi was now an Epsilon-level superhuman.

Looking across the world, he was also a top-tier powerhouse.

Logically speaking, few would dare to oppose him.

But it wasn't completely impossible.

During the Mist Valley operation, he had thoroughly offended nations including the Colombian Ocean Fleet, Neon Pirate, New Rohan, and Malai.

The East Sea Region also held quite a grudge against him.

He couldn't completely guarantee that those guys wouldn't do something behind his back.

Of course, analyzing from a rational logic perspective, the probability of that was extremely low.

For anyone to want to deal with an Epsilon-level superhuman, especially on Huaxu Kingdom's home turf, would be extremely foolish.

"Could it be Zhu Zheng?"

Zhang Yi muttered to himself, but Zhu Zheng shouldn't be that stupid either.

He rubbed his head, feeling somewhat unable to figure it out.

Seeing this, Zhou Ke'er immediately called everyone in the house over to discuss countermeasures together.

Everyone gathered in the living room.

After hearing about the cockroach swarm incident, many felt goosebumps.

Regarding cockroaches, their feeling was less fear and more disgust.

Just thinking about cockroaches swarming over like a tide, crawling all over one's body, was enough to make almost anyone's skin crawl.

"This is strange. I remember cockroaches are cold-blooded animals. They can't move in low-temperature environments and can even freeze to death. That's why cockroaches in the north never became a major problem in the past."

"So why did so many cockroaches suddenly appear?"

Zhang Yi said, "That's easy to explain. 'Mutation'—these two words are the answer to everything."

"The reason cockroaches are so hard to eradicate is because of their strong adaptability to environments and terrifying reproductive capacity."

"Even if the frostwave caused massive die-offs, as long as one in a hundred million cockroaches developed a cold-resistant mutation, they could pass on that gene."

"If food is sufficient, the number of descendants a pair of cockroaches can produce is beyond calculation."

Chapter 1092: Insect Extermination Team

The appearance of mutated cockroaches did not surprise anyone.

If humans could mutate, then animals, plants, insects... indeed, all living creatures naturally could as well.

It wasn't like they hadn't seen them before; they even had two mutated creatures at home.

However, organized and disciplined attacks by such mutated creatures against humans forced them to take the matter seriously.

The shadows of the past zombie hordes and rat swarms still lingered in their hearts.

Yang Xinxin pondered for a while before speaking up, "I don't think this matter is as simple as it seems. Most likely, someone is behind all this, manipulating everything."

"It's no coincidence that all three major bases were attacked at the same time, neither too early nor too late. That's definitely not random."

Zhang Yi nodded, "I think so too, but I can't figure out who it might be."

If it were people from those powerful factions seeking revenge against Zhang Yi, they wouldn't use such childish methods.

A cockroach swarm would at most disgust Zhang Yi and cause him some trouble, but it wouldn't harm him or his companions.

Yang Xinxin said, "This world is already different from before. Many things can no longer be measured by common sense."

"So, brother, why don't we deal with problems as they come? Let's solve the cockroach swarm issue first. By then, I believe the other side will naturally make their next move."

Zhang Yi crossed his arms and leaned back on the sofa, his expression somewhat helpless.

"Exterminating pests? That's not really my area of expertise."

It's a species humanity hasn't managed to eradicate in thousands of years, and now, who knows to what extent they've already infested Tianhai City.

Although Zhang Yi was very powerful, when it came to killing insects, he really had no good ideas.

"If only a pest control specialist could come and help right now!"

Zhang Yi sighed.

A chorus of sighs echoed in the room simultaneously.

Pest extermination was truly a hassle.

Even though it was troublesome, what needed to be done still had to be done.

Zhang Yi quickly formulated a plan with the people at home.

Since they needed to kill insects, insecticide was obviously the best option.

However, the cockroaches were now mutated. Considering their tenacious vitality, even if they developed an insecticide, they might adapt to it.

The same logic applied to flooding methods.

Even if they temporarily killed some cockroaches, they couldn't completely eradicate the problem.

After much thought, no one had a particularly good solution.

Even the world-renowned [Chaos] seemed somewhat at a loss when faced with such troublesome bugs.

Of course, the Shelter wasn't worried about being harassed by cockroaches.

But if the cockroaches were allowed to proliferate unchecked, the entire Tianhai City would likely soon become a giant cockroach nest, which would give Zhang Yi a massive headache.

After much deliberation, he decided to seek help from Blizzard City.

After all, when it came to dealing with mutated creatures, they had more experience.

Upon receiving Zhang Yi's request for help, Zhu Zheng's mouth almost twisted into a grin from ear to ear.

Heaven knows how rare an opportunity it was for Zhang Yi to actively come asking for his help!

"Just killing insects? We've handled this kind of situation more than once! Don't worry, leave this to us. Blizzard City has no shortage of professional pest exterminators!"

Soon, escorted by the Celestial Hound Squad, a professional pest eradication team arrived in Tianhai City.

Their methods were indeed professional. First, they captured several mutated cockroaches and quickly formulated a drug.

Then, with the cooperation of the Celestial Hound Squad members, they distributed this drug in areas where cockroaches were likely to appear.

"Wait a minute, won't these drugs pollute the soil and water quality?"

Zhang Yi raised his doubts.

The pest control expert formulating the drugs explained to Zhang Yi, "These are genetic drugs, specifically developed to target the local mutated cockroaches."

"After ingesting the drug, they won't die immediately. Instead, they'll lose their reproductive ability and die after seven days."

"Not only that, their reproductive instincts will become extremely strong, and they'll frantically mate with the opposite sex. The genetic drug will spread through this method."

After hearing this, even Zhang Yi couldn't help but applaud in admiration.

"This is simply brilliant! The biggest problem with cockroaches is their strong reproductive ability. Using this very characteristic against them is ruthless!"

After the pest control experts' operations, sure enough, the insect infestation in Tianhai City quickly diminished until it became virtually invisible.

Zhang Yi couldn't help but sigh with emotion, "There is a sequence to learning the Way, and each trade has its master. Every person is a screw; placed in the right position, they can play a role greater than that of an Epsilon-level superhuman."

After completing their mission, the pest control experts left Tianhai City, leaving Zhang Yi their contact information before departing.

They said if any further problems arose, he should contact them again.

As they were leaving, Zhang Yi asked them one question, "Is it possible that the cockroaches might adapt to this drug and develop resistance?"

The pest control expert smiled.

"This is a genetic drug, targeting specific gene sequences in them. Unless these cockroaches undergo massive mutations in their gene sequences again, they simply cannot adapt."

Zhang Yi nodded, a meaningful glint flashing in his eyes.

"In that case, I'm relieved."

If any further problems occurred, it would basically confirm that someone was pulling strings behind the scenes.

Zhang Yi saw them off, but he didn't relax afterward. Instead, he ordered the people at the three major bases not to let their guard down.

Then, it was just a matter of quietly waiting to see how things would develop.

...

West Mountain Base, within an abandoned cave.

From a dim, damp, and foul-smelling space came an angry voice.

"Damn it, they actually killed my precious bugs!"

"But it doesn't matter. As long as my precious ones can't be killed, they'll only grow stronger!"

"After all, Tianhai City has no shortage of food."

In a discarded laboratory, a faint brownish light illuminated an extremely ugly face.

His face was covered with unsightly pits and holes. His two eyes were like something from a Picasso painting—one slanted, one vertical—and only a few sparse hairs remained on his head.

He held several reagent bottles in his hands, mixing potions of different colors. In no time, he concocted a dark green liquid.

"The bugs I raise, you can't kill them all! Hehehe!"

He let out a laugh that sounded like insects chirping, then turned around, casually grabbed a cockroach the size of a thumb, and stuffed it into the bottle.

The cockroach struggled in the liquid for a while, then suddenly underwent a strange transformation. Seven or eight auxiliary legs sprouted from various parts of its body, and its entire form swelled several times in size, turning a deep, ink-like green.

"Pop!"

The flask shattered directly. The cockroach, covered in green mucus, quickly scurried away into the distance.

The ugly freak's eyeballs almost bulged out of their sockets, an extremely hideous smile spreading across his face.

"I'll raise the hardest-to-kill bugs! Zhang Yi, just you wait and see, hehehe!"

Chapter 1093: When Soldiers Come, Generals Will Block Them

Less than ten days after the Cockroach Swarm disappeared, it emerged from the underground of Tianhai City once again.

They brazenly invaded all the major resource points across Tianhai City.

Supermarkets, material factories, and all activity zones around the three major bases were targeted. One morning, when Zhang Yi woke up, he was shocked to discover that even Xu Family Town on the other side of the Egret River had been overrun by a massive number of cockroaches.

"They've appeared again! Just as I thought, someone is definitely pulling the strings behind the scenes."

Abnormal biological activity absolutely indicated human intervention from the shadows.

Otherwise, it wouldn't align with natural laws.

Fortunately, over the past year, Zhang Yi had already cleared out the vast majority of supermarkets in Tianhai City.

He had collected most of the important supplies and wasn't too worried about them being destroyed by the Cockroach Swarm.

However, letting this situation continue was ultimately not a solution.

Zhang Yi immediately called the Pest Control Experts from Blizzard City, asking them to come again.

"Have the members of the Celestial Hound Squad escort you here. The journey might not be entirely safe," Zhang Yi reminded them.

If someone was truly operating from the shadows, they would very likely intercept these Pest Control Experts.

A few hours later, Baili Changqing, Wu Di, and others escorted the Pest Control Experts to the location.

"This is absolutely abnormal. In theory, it's almost impossible for them to adapt to the Genetic Drug so quickly."

"I believe there must be someone manipulating things behind the scenes," the Pest Control Expert said with a furrowed brow, expressing his opinion on the situation.

He was a professional. He had confidently guaranteed there would be no more problems, yet the Cockroach Swarm erupted again within days.

Naturally, he had to explain himself clearly.

Zhang Yi said, "I know. You all have done a very good job with this matter. However, I'll have to trouble you to work on it once more."

When it came to pest extermination, even an Epsilon-level superhuman like him didn't have particularly effective methods.

It wasn't as if he could flip the entire Tianhai City over to kill the bugs hiding in the dark underground, right?

The Pest Control Experts nodded and immediately got busy.

They captured some cockroaches again. After research, their expressions changed drastically.

"Indeed, they have mutated again! They are almost no longer the same species as the insects we discovered last time!"

Zhang Yi asked curiously, "Is such a possibility realistic? For a species to undergo multiple significant mutations in a short period?"

The Pest Control Expert replied, "Natural mutation, of course not. But if there is human intervention to promote it, then it becomes possible."

This was an era of mutation. After biological mutation, creatures possessed all sorts of unbelievable abilities. Nothing could be measured by conventional logic.

Zhang Yi sneered inwardly.

Now that he knew someone was behind this, the problem became easier to solve.

He said to Baili Changqing and the Pest Control Experts, "Everyone, I'll have to trouble you to stay and live here for this period to help me resolve the pest problem."

Baili Changqing naturally had no objections. The experts from the Pest Control Team also knew exactly who Zhang Yi was and expressed their willingness to help him with this matter.

Zhang Yi arranged accommodation for them on the second floor of the basement.

Then he called Yang Xinxin over to discuss countermeasures.

"It's confirmed there is definitely human involvement behind this, Xinxin. Help me think, what should we do now to properly handle this situation?"

Even though he knew someone was secretly causing trouble, that individual certainly wouldn't be foolish enough to come out and be discovered.

Yang Xinxin said calmly, "Brother, I've already thought about this problem. First, we need to confirm who might possibly be targeting us."

"And what his ultimate goal is."

"However, no matter how you look at it, this operation exudes a strange aura."

Zhang Yi's brow furrowed.

"Yeah, this incident is baffling. It's not like a year ago anymore. Back then, we would have had major headaches dealing with rat swarms and zombie hordes."

"But now, problems of this level can no longer threaten us. So what's the point of the other party doing this?"

Yang Xinxin parted her cherry lips and uttered two words, "Chaos! He wants to create chaos in Tianhai City."

Zhang Yi smiled, "Explain in detail."

Yang Xinxin explained, "The Cockroach Swarm naturally has no impact on you, brother. Your current strength is immense, and there aren't many existences that can affect you anymore."

"But—the three major bases are still very weak. We are also not strong enough."

"And you, brother, can't possibly stay in Tianhai City forever, protecting every single person, right?"

Zhang Yi instantly understood. His expression turned serious, "You mean to say he wants to target you all?"

Yang Xinxin nodded.

"If I were your enemy, brother, I would definitely do this. Even if I couldn't kill you, I could still make you feel pain by destroying the things you cherish."

She suddenly revealed a playful smile, tilting her head to look at Zhang Yi.

"Hurting someone, getting revenge on someone, as long as it makes them feel pain, isn't that enough?"

Zhang Yi suddenly felt a chill on his skin.

He subconsciously rubbed his arm and let out a long sigh.

"I've considered this problem too."

As a cautious survivor, Zhang Yi had, of course, considered all potential unfavorable consequences.

This included the possibility of someone attacking his weak points.

This was also why Zhang Yi had spent enormous time and effort over the past few months to enhance the strength of everyone in the Shelter.

As for the three major bases, although Zhang Yi didn't have deep feelings for them, he would still feel a bit upset if they were wiped out.

Searching his heart, if he were his own opponent, and it was clear he couldn't directly kill himself, he would undoubtedly spare no effort and use all means to strike at himself.

"Creating chaos, huh? Interesting, this is truly fascinating!"

Zhang Yi rubbed his temples, momentarily unable to figure out who might be targeting him.

After all, since the Apocalypse began, he had made quite a few mortal enemies in order to survive.

"But, how exactly should I solve this problem?"

Zhang Yi felt somewhat troubled.

He wasn't an omnipotent being either. Faced with an enemy hidden in the shadows, using insects as weapons, he genuinely didn't know how to resolve it.

This was even more vexing than facing the zombie hordes back then.

At most, there were only tens of millions of zombies. Flooding, burning—you could eventually kill them all.

But cockroaches? As long as one pair survived underground in this land, relying on their formidable adaptability after mutation and the abundant corpses buried underground as food, it wouldn't be long before they multiplied into billions, even hundreds of billions, trillions, or tens of trillions!

Just as Zhang Yi was feeling troubled, a fair, delicate little hand rested on his shoulder.

"Brother, you actually don't need to be anxious."

Chapter 1094: Highland Village

Zhang Yi looked at Yang Xinxin, who was comforting him.

Yang Xinxin said with a smile, "The other party doesn't dare to stand up and confront us, which shows his strength isn't strong enough. He's just a clownish buffoon."

"So, it's him who should be afraid, not you!"

"Time is not on his side, but on ours. Please wait quietly for the story to unfold!"

The anxious emotions in Zhang Yi's heart were soothed calm by Yang Xinxin.

Yang Xinxin was right. There was no need for him to be too anxious now. The more anxious he was, the easier it would be to make mistakes.

"You're right. Although the other party has created a certain degree of chaos, they haven't caused any substantial damage to Tianhai City or to us."

"If they want to target me, they must use more ruthless methods. Let's wait and see!"

For the next period of time, Zhang Yi had the Pest Control Experts carry out cockroach extermination in Tianhai City.

Those cockroaches were indeed troublesome, but their mutation period was too short. It was simply impossible for overly powerful individuals to appear.

Don't think the Celestial Hound Squad looks weak just because they seem incompetent on missions with Zhang Yi.

That's only because Zhang Yi's individual strength is too overpowering.

Looking across the entire Jiangnan Region, this group led by Baili Changqing might not be able to walk sideways everywhere, but tasks below the squad leader level were something they could practically do blindfolded.

So, it wasn't long before they once again completed the suppression of the Cockroach Swarm in Tianhai City.

This feeling was like using insecticide to kill cockroaches in the kitchen.

Every time, a batch would be killed, but soon after, survivors would continue to reproduce.

Zhang Yi wasn't in a hurry either. He and Yang Xinxin monitored the situation in the entire Tianhai City, trying to determine the location of the main nest based on the movement patterns of the Cockroach Swarm.

As long as enough samples were collected, they would definitely be able to deduce the approximate range through mathematical calculations.

However, one day, Yang Xinxin came to Zhang Yi holding her computer, her face full of astonishment as she said:

"Brother, I suddenly discovered something interesting!"

Zhang Yi leaned over. "Did you find the insect nest?"

Yang Xinxin shook her head. "No, on the contrary. I found a place in Tianhai City that hasn't been affected by the Cockroach Swarm. This is very interesting."

Zhang Yi looked at the computer screen, which currently displayed a map of Tianhai City.

The extent of the Cockroach Swarm infestation was marked with colors on it.

But after zooming in, two blank areas clearly appeared.

One area was naturally Zhang Yi's Shelter.

The other area was a place relatively remote from the city center, close to the edge of Tianhai City.

This place was called Gaoyuan Village, a rural area of Tianhai City.

That's right, even the largest cities have rural areas.

Surrounding the urban area of Tianhai City, there were quite a few such places. Strictly speaking, Xu Family Town was also an urban-rural fringe area, belonging to a rural town.

But in the outer regions, there were even more remote locations that were proper, genuine countryside.

These places were too remote. Many locals of Tianhai City might never go there in their entire lives.

"Gaoyuan Village. Interesting, there must be something wrong here. I need to go check it out!"

Yang Xinxin said, "Brother, be careful! This place might be an enemy trap."

Zhang Yi nodded. "Don't worry, there's no one in this world more cautious than me."

Zhang Yi never underestimated any opponent, nor would he ever let his guard down in any situation where danger might exist.

So, he quickly put on his full set of combat gear. Besides the second-generation black combat suit, he also put on the custom-made combat suit over it.

He actually checked all his weapons every day, but before setting off, he inspected them again, not stopping until he confirmed they could be used at any moment.

Thus, after arming himself to the teeth, he called Hua Hua over.

"Meow!"

Hua Hua jumped into Zhang Yi's arms, looking up at him with its big round eyes.

"Master, are we going out to play?"

Zhang Yi smiled and stroked its soft fur a few times. "I'm going out for a bit. You stay here and keep watch. Right now, in the entire Shelter, aside from me, you're the strongest. You need to take on the responsibility of protecting everyone!"

With Hua Hua here, unless an Epsilon-level superhuman appeared, no one could breach the Shelter.

"Meow! Hua Hua understands!"

Hua Hua jumped onto the sofa and immediately switched to a focused expression, its eyes wide like copper bells, staring intently out the window.

Zhang Yi thought for a moment, feeling that going out alone wasn't quite proper. It would be best to find a bodyguard to prevent any accidents.

So he went to find Liang Yue.

When Liang Yue heard Zhang Yi wanted her to go out with him, a faint smile appeared on her face.

"Alright!"

Without saying much more, she directly returned to her room, changed into a white combat suit, put on black deerskin gloves, and picked up that long, narrow, and heavy Longming Tang Dao.

Liang Yue walked out of the room and came before Zhang Yi, looking heroic and spirited.

"Let's go!"

After confirming the location of Gaoyuan Village, Zhang Yi opened the Dimensional Gate and took Liang Yue through it towards that direction.

...

[Ten days ago, when the Cockroach Swarm first began to wreak havoc in Tianhai City.]

Tianhai City, Gaoyuan Village.

Around big cities, there are always such villages. They mainly engage in crop cultivation, supplying the city, maintaining the city's operation like a blood transfusion.

Gaoyuan Village was just such a village.

Although it was a rural area, relying on a major metropolis like Tianhai City, the living standard in the village was actually quite good.

Most villagers made a living by growing greenhouse vegetables and providing other living materials for Tianhai City.

After the Ice Age descended, like Xu Family Town, they survived by relying on their self-reliance capabilities and stored supplies.

However, they were luckier than Xu Family Town.

They didn't encounter the West Mountain Base or Zhang Yi, and because of their remote location, they were less affected by the zombie hordes back then.

So to this day, quite a few villagers in Gaoyuan Village were still alive.

Perhaps back then, if those people from Xu Family Town hadn't encountered Zhang Yi and the West Mountain Base, they too could have survived well until now.

But there aren't that many 'ifs' in this world. There are always people who can survive in the cracks.

Sometimes, human vitality is no weaker than that of cockroaches.

However, this time, the sudden outbreak of the Cockroach Swarm brought them huge trouble.

No matter how terrifying zombies looked, they could be killed one by one.

But those pesky cockroaches wouldn't prioritize attacking their people. Instead, they stole the food they had stored in cellars beneath the snow.

After several cockroach infestations, the already scarce food reserves of Gaoyuan Village had become even more scarce.

So at this moment, Gaoyuan Village's village chief, Gao Tianwu, had a massive headache.

Currently, Gaoyuan Village's food wouldn't last much longer. If they couldn't find a way to solve the food problem within half a month, the entire village would likely descend into chaos.

What hungry people turn into, anyone who has read history books understands.

Either starve to death, kill each other, or even resort to exchanging children to eat.

By then, Gaoyuan Village would be finished!

Chapter 1095: Gao Tianwu

Gao Tianwu, the village chief of Gaoyuan Village, sat in his office, worrying about the village's food supply for the next half month.

He knew all too well that once food ran out, the entire Gaoyuan Village would quickly collapse.

But after the apocalypse, growing crops had become incredibly difficult.

They had skilled growers among them who knew how to cultivate mushrooms on rotten wood, but that stuff wasn't filling and could only slightly fill the food gap.

The most crucial staples like rice, flour, oil, and salt were dwindling faster and faster.

They had thought about going to the urban districts of Tianhai City to scavenge more resources.

As early as over half a year ago, they had managed to cross the vast snowy expanse to investigate Tianhai City.

The situation there had chilled their hearts.

It had long been carved up by several large organizations.

Those groups had many people, powerful influence, and possessed firearms. For the people of Gaoyuan Village to go compete with them for supplies would be absolute suicide.

Thinking of this, Gao Tianwu's brow furrowed tightly, worrying about the village's future.

At that moment, a knock came from outside the door.

"Come in!"

Gao Tianwu said.

The door was pushed open, and a young man with a simple, honest face and tall stature walked in.

This was Gao Tianwu's younger brother, Gao Changguang. After the apocalypse, he had been assisting him in maintaining the village's order.

Gao Tianwu forced a smile onto his face.

"Xiao Guang, how did it go with the supply search I sent you on?"

Xiao Guang wore a look of apology. Seeing this, Gao Tianwu's heart sank.

"Brother Xiao Wu, we've already scavenged clean every place within a ten-mile radius of the village. What supplies could possibly be left now?"

"This time, I risked taking the brothers to places farther away, but with the endless snow, everything is buried. There's simply no clue where to start."

Gao Tianwu took a deep breath, his face full of worry. How could he not know how difficult it was to leave the village to search for supplies at a time like this?

Even if there were undiscovered supplies buried in the snow, the year-long snowfall had long since buried those uninhabited areas.

That thick, tens-of-meters-deep snow, if they had to dig through it with human labor alone, when would they ever finish?

Even though he was a superhuman with extraordinary power, it was still difficult to accomplish such a troublesome task.

Xiao Guang continued, "Brother Xiao Wu, if this continues, our village's food won't last much longer."

"People have already started grumbling in private. Last night, I just caught a few thieves trying to steal food! Should we punish them harshly as a warning to the other villagers?"

Gao Tianwu propped his chin on his hand, his expression grave as he said:

"We can't do that. The villagers steal food because they're worried there won't be enough to eat, so they want to hide some away to get through the tough times."

"To put it bluntly, they just want to survive. What's wrong with that?"

Xiao Guang said somewhat discontentedly, "But if everyone acts like them, our village will fall into chaos!"

Gao Tianwu leaned back in his chair, thought for a long time, and then slowly said:

"Given the situation, we have to take some special measures."

"Pass down the order: starting today, daily meals are reduced to one. Except for those on daily patrol duty, everyone else should reduce activity. If you don't move, you won't get as hungry."

"When making porridge, add more water, use less grain. This way, the food can at least last a bit longer."

Xiao Guang made a bitter face. "Brother Xiao Wu, everyone's already eating so little. If we do this, I'm afraid people will resent it!"

Gao Changguang said helplessly, "There's no other choice. We'll just have to let the villagers endure some hardship for now. I'll bear the criticism."

"In the next few days, I'll personally lead a team to search for food. I refuse to believe that in a vast city like Tianhai, there isn't enough food for a few hundred people from Gaoyuan Village!"

Xiao Guang accepted the order and left, then had someone notify the villagers of the news.

Upon hearing this command, the villagers immediately erupted in uproar.

A villager named Meng Chuan immediately said, "Day after day, we can't even eat our fill. Now we have to add more water to the already thin porridge? Might as well just let us drink water!"

"How is Xiao Wu running this village? If he can't get food, he shouldn't have become village chief in the first place!"

Another villager whispered, "You can't say that. If it weren't for Xiao Wu and his brothers back then, how could we ordinary folks have fought off the neighboring big villages? They would have wiped us out completely. Whether we could even survive would have been a question."

Meng Chuan snorted coldly. "The past is the past, the present is the present. No matter how well he did back then, who can guarantee he hasn't changed now?"

"Making us drink porridge every day, for all we know, he's secretly eating white flour buns behind our backs!"

Faced with Meng Chuan's harsh words, not all the villagers were ungrateful.

Someone immediately stepped forward to rebuke Meng Chuan. "Don't talk nonsense. Xiao Wu isn't that kind of person."

Meng Chuan sneered. He first carefully surveyed his surroundings, then lowered his voice to say to the other villagers:

"What do you know? That guy is stealing from his own post, hoarding all the food in his own family's cellar."

"Do you really think he'll share it equally with us? Dream on!"

"I saw with my own eyes him secretly taking a large sack of food from the cellar, sneaking off to who knows where!"

As soon as these words were spoken, several nearby villagers widened their eyes.

"Are you telling the truth or not?"

Meng Chuan vowed solemnly, "How could it be false? If I'm lying, you can cut out my tongue!"

Rumors sprouted wings and flew swiftly through the air.

Because Gaoyuan Village faced a food crisis, with villagers unable to eat their fill, resentment began to grow in their hearts.

At such a time, a tiny spark was enough to plant seeds of suspicion within them.

Given fertile soil, all it needed was time to slowly grow, strengthen, and eventually transform into a terrifying monster.

To solve the village's food problem, Gao Tianwu had no choice but to personally lead a team out to search for food.

As a superhuman, he possessed strength beyond ordinary people, allowing him to better excavate supplies buried beneath the snow layers.

In the past, he had also worked in Tianhai City, delivering takeout and parcels, and serving as a waiter in bars. He was relatively familiar with the locations of some large supermarkets and hotels.

He also knew such places often had stockpiles.

So, leading a group of people, relying on memory and the few remaining tall buildings, they carefully groped their way through the heavy snow.

After several days of hard work, they finally found some supplies from the snow.

Although not much, it filled two sleds pulled by dogs.

Xiao Guang happily said to Gao Tianwu, "Brother Xiao Wu, this is great! If we ration these supplies carefully, they'll last us for several more days!"

Gao Tianwu exhaled a thick white mist, looking somewhat weary, but with unconcealable joy in his eyes.

"Good, let's keep up this momentum. I remember about seven or eight kilometers further ahead, there's a very large supermarket."

"It's getting late. Let them rest first. Tomorrow, we'll take more people to search there."

The daylight dimmed; temperatures would drop even lower at night. The group didn't dare linger, dragging the sleds back home.

Chapter 1096: Betrayal

The sky gradually darkened as Gao Tianwu led everyone back to Gaoyuan Village.

Although they had been busy all day, braving the wind and snow, the trip had yielded some gains, so everyone was still relatively happy in their hearts.

After returning to the village, Gao Tianwu told Xiao Guang to take the food to the warehouse.

He was utterly exhausted at this point, only wanting to go back and get a good night's sleep to recover his energy.

Xiao Guang accepted the order and led people to store the food.

Gao Tianwu didn't even take off his clothes, just wrapped himself in a blanket and closed his eyes heavily.

He didn't know how much time had passed when a torrent of curses suddenly reached his ears.

"You dog! Get up!"

Immediately after, a sharp pain shot through his body.

Gao Tianwu struggled to open his eyes, only to find he couldn't move at all—he was firmly tied up with ropes!

He was shocked and horrified. Looking up, he saw Meng Chuan standing with a group of villagers, their faces filled with anger as they glared at him.

"What are you doing?"

Gao Tianwu was completely bewildered, not understanding why the villagers would do this to him.

"You're asking on purpose, you bastard!"

Meng Chuan walked over and kicked him squarely in the body, sending him tumbling to the ground.

Several villagers came over and, without another word, started dragging him outside.

They quickly hauled Gao Tianwu out.

Once outside, the sight before Gao Tianwu's eyes made his pupils contract sharply!

In the village square, hundreds of torches were lit. In the center, a large cauldron was set up—the kind used for slaughtering the New Year's pig during festivals.

All his brothers, including his own younger brother Xiao Guang, were tied up and forced to kneel on the ground.

Betrayal!

That was the first word that flashed through Gao Tianwu's mind.

"What are you doing? Why have you tied us up?"

Gao Tianwu demanded angrily.

In response, someone struck him solidly twice behind the knees with a stick, knocking him flat on the ground again.

Meng Chuan walked over, pointing at his nose and cursing, "Gao Tianwu, you bastard! You've been throwing your weight around just because you have superhuman abilities for so long now! All of us villagers have endured you and your brothers long enough!"

"Today, we're going to skin you alive to restore order!"

Gao Tianwu's younger brothers were already beaten bloody all over. Hearing Meng Chuan's words, they could only glare at him in fury.

"That's bullshit!"

Xiao Guang's eyes were bloodshot.

"If it weren't for Brother Xiaowu, Gaoyuan Village would have been wiped out by other villages long ago!"

"And we even went out to find food for you all! Is this how you repay us?"

A villager at the corner of his mouth revealed a cold sneer. Looking at Xiao Guang and Gao Tianwu on the ground, a flash of triumphant gleam passed through his eyes.

Yes, during the most difficult days, it was indeed Gao Tianwu and his brothers who protected the village.

At first, the villagers were very grateful to them.

But as time passed and the immediate dangers around them faded, they gradually began to forget those hardships.

And towards Village Chief Gao Tianwu, who had always strictly managed them, feelings of resentment slowly began to grow in their hearts.

Although they usually didn't dare to speak out, now, the situation had changed!

They were the ones in the high position now, while Gao Tianwu and his brothers had become prisoners that everyone wanted to beat!

Seeing these people they once had to flatter and obey meekly now reduced to drowning dogs, the villagers felt nothing but immense satisfaction in their hearts!

For most people, they didn't really care about the truth of the matter.

As long as they saw those in high positions being brought down, they would cheer along, then get their share of the spoils, and wait for the next person in power to fall.

Several villagers rushed forward and viciously kicked Xiao Guang in the face several times, kicking his nose crooked and knocking out several of his teeth.

Xiao Guang's mouth was full of blood, his face swollen, unable to utter a single complete sentence anymore.

Seeing this scene, Gao Tianwu felt blood rush to his head. He stared deathly at Meng Chuan and roared,

"If you have any issues, come at me! Don't take it out on my brothers!"

"Meng Chuan, you just want to be the village chief, right? I can give it to you! Let us go!"

A gleeful light flickered in Meng Chuan's narrow, triangular eyes. The smile at the corner of his mouth was exactly like that of a cunning fox.

"Gao Tianwu," he leaned down close to Gao Tianwu's face and said with a grin, "You bastard, you've finally come to this day too!"

"I just can't stand you! What makes you qualified to be the boss? Today, I'm taking your position, and," he opened his eyes, revealing a fierce, icy gaze, "I'm taking all of your lives too!"

Gao Tianwu's heart instantly turned cold.

If it were just about losing the village chief position, that would be one thing, but these villagers... these villagers actually wanted the lives of him and his brothers?

"Why???"

He unwillingly raised his neck, letting out an angry demand.

"In the year I've been village chief, I've given everything I have so this whole village could survive!"

"How many groups of wanderers have we protected the village from and driven away?"

"How much food have we found for you all, braving wind and snow?"

"Are you all such ungrateful people?"

Gao Tianwu roared with indignation, his anger so intense he felt like vomiting blood.

Being betrayed by the people he had protected with all his heart and soul—no one could accept that.

Hearing his words, the surrounding villagers showed hesitant expressions on their faces.

After all, what Gao Tianwu said was true; they had indeed contributed a lot to Gaoyuan Village.

Several people around Meng Chuan immediately started shouting and cursing loudly.

"Shut up! You're from Gaoyuan Village too! Talking about protecting the village—didn't the villagers protect you too? Contributing to the collective is your duty! Now you come asking for credit? Have you no shame?"

"You became village chief and embezzled how much of the village's food? Do you really think we don't know? I saw with my own eyes you stealing collective food and hiding it away."

Gao Tianwu almost spat out a mouthful of old blood.

Gaoyuan Village protected him?

How laughable!

Both he and his brother Xiao Guang were superhumans. After the apocalypse, relying on their own abilities, they and their group of brothers could have lived perfectly well on their own.

Back then, it was out of fellow-villager sentiment that they resolutely stepped forward to protect the village.

Without them, Gaoyuan Village would never have been able to compete with the surrounding larger, more populous villages.

Not to mention the later groups of armed wanderers who came to rob.

How did it become, in their mouths now, that Gao Tianwu and the others' contributions were taken for granted?

As for that incident about stealing food...

Gao Tianwu hurriedly explained, "You've misunderstood! I didn't steal the food! I used it to hire someone to solve the cockroach problem from before!"

Meng Chuan gave a sinister laugh and kicked him squarely in the chest. Gao Tianwu's breath was knocked out of him, his face turning red.

"At a time like this, who's going to listen to your nonsense?"

Gao Tianwu glared viciously at Meng Chuan. Meng Chuan suddenly squatted down, grabbed the hair at the back of his head, and sneered into his ear,

"Don't you understand the situation yet? Now that everyone has taken action, there's no turning back. So no matter what your reasons were, tonight, you have to die!"

Chapter 1097: Solutions to the Cockroach Problem

Meng Chuan's words made Gao Tianwu's heart turn ice-cold. He glared furiously at Meng Chuan and roared, "Meng Chuan, you... you..."

Meng Chuan didn't let him finish. He directly delivered two powerful punches to Gao Tianwu's chest.

Gao Tianwu, having just endured a full day of work, was extremely weak. He was immediately struck speechless, coughing violently.

"Light the fire! Boil the water! Let's cook these black-hearted bastards and give the menfolk a good meal!"

Meng Chuan bellowed triumphantly.

Hearing this, the villagers' eyes glinted with a greenish light. Excitement lit up their faces, and their crimson tongues licked their parched, cracked lips.

It had been a year since the Apocalypse. For them, such things could no longer be considered outrageous.

Besides, after drinking watery gruel for nearly half a month, they were long past the point of unbearable hunger.

Improving their diet a bit sounded pretty good.

A raging fire blazed under the massive pot. Snow piled inside melted rapidly, and the villagers cheered excitedly.

Some went over to strip Xiao Guang and the others of their clothes.

Gao Tianwu was pinned down by two men, his face pressed into the dirt. Powerless to struggle, he could only watch helplessly as his brothers were about to be thrown alive into the giant boiling pot.

"Stop!! Stop, you beasts!!"

"Don't touch them! If you want to eat someone, eat me instead!!"

Gao Tianwu howled in grief and fury, his eyes so bloodshot they seemed about to drip blood.

The thought that they had worked so hard to protect such a pack of beasts all this time filled him with heart-wrenching pain and overwhelming rage!

Meng Chuan threw his head back and laughed wildly. "Hahaha! Don't be impatient. Take it slow. With hundreds of households in our village, not a single one of your brothers will be left!"

Xiao Guang and the others were soon stripped completely naked. They roared in despair and anger, on the verge of being thrown into the boiling pot.

And right at that moment, on a low hill not far away, Zhang Yi and Liang Yue were watching everything unfold.

After receiving the intelligence, Zhang Yi had immediately brought Liang Yue here.

Seeing the situation in Gaoyuan Village, a flicker of pity flashed in Liang Yue's eyes. The villagers' act of biting the hand that fed them made her clench her fists.

But she didn't act rashly. Instead, she looked at Zhang Yi beside her.

Zhang Yi stood with his arms crossed, watching the scene before him with keen interest.

These villagers had nothing to do with him. How they survived, what kind of dramatic, dog-blooded events unfolded among them, Zhang Yi didn't want to get involved.

Somehow, though, seeing Gao Tianwu pinned down, his face ground into the dirt, filled with despair and unwillingness, Zhang Yi seemed to see a reflection of his past self—being treated like a fattened hog, dismembered alive.

Moreover, he had heard something Gao Tianwu said.

Gao Tianwu knew someone who could deal with the Cockroach Swarm, which was why he had protected the entire Gaoyuan Village from being utterly destroyed by it.

These two reasons were enough.

"Zhang Yi..."

Liang Yue spoke in a somewhat pleading tone, her eyes full of earnest entreaty.

Zhang Yi raised the corner of his mouth in a faint smile. "Go save those few people."

Liang Yue's eyes lit up. She nodded, and in a flash, her figure vanished from the low hill.

Just as the villagers were cheering and about to throw Xiao Guang and the others into the pot for cooking, a gale-force wind shot towards them.

"BOOM!!"

The air erupted with a terrifying sonic boom. Over a dozen villagers nearby were sent flying dozens of meters away, crashing heavily into the snow.

Xiao Guang and the others, stark naked, landed on the ground, but at least they didn't fall into the boiling water.

The sudden turn of events startled everyone.

Gao Tianwu was stunned for a moment, as if seeing a savior.

Meng Chuan immediately pulled a dagger from his sleeve, pointing it warily at Liang Yue.

"Who are you? Why are you interfering in Gaoyuan Village's affairs? I advise you to leave immediately, otherwise, we won't be polite!"

Liang Yue looked coldly at Meng Chuan and rebuked, "Let them go!"

Meng Chuan gulped. "What... what does this have to do with you?"

Before Liang Yue could speak, Zhang Yi stepped out from a spatial door beside her.

Zhang Yi looked at Liang Yue, his gaze indifferent. "You're too indecisive."

As soon as his words fell, a black tentacle suddenly pierced through Meng Chuan's chest!

The blood instantly seemed to freeze. Meng Chuan stared blankly down, then collapsed limply to the ground.

"People like him will only cause trouble if left alive. Just kill them and be done with it."

Zhang Yi said flatly.

Liang Yue hesitated slightly. "I... I was originally going to reason with them. After all, they're just ordinary villagers."

Zhang Yi shook his head helplessly. "The pitiable have their own hateful aspects. There's no need to sympathize with them."

The surrounding villagers, witnessing this scene, were now utterly terrified.

Even the stupidest among them knew they had encountered powerful superhumans.

Because Gao Tianwu and Xiao Guang were superhumans.

If it weren't for the fact that they had taken advantage of their exhaustion after a day out searching for supplies, they wouldn't have dared to act.

Superhumans possessed formidable power, something ordinary people couldn't contend with.

Zhang Yi glanced at the stripped-naked guys on the ground, casually took a few padded jackets from his Dimensional Space, and tossed them over.

Although he didn't sympathize with these guys, he and Liang Yue had saved them after all. If they died now, it would reflect poorly on him.

Meng Chuan was dead, but he still had accomplices. Seeing that the mere appearance of just Zhang Yi and Liang Yue had cowed all the villagers, they realized they had to do something. Otherwise, once Gao Tianwu broke free, they wouldn't fare well either.

A few of them exchanged glances. Immediately, someone from behind Zhang Yi raised a shovel and charged!

Several others reached into their clothes and pulled out handguns.

"Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh!!!"

Sharp spikes abruptly emerged from the void, piercing straight through their bodies.

This group didn't even have time to shout a proper slogan before their lives drained away through the massive bloody holes in their chests.

The villagers trembled with fear. Many even wet their pants on the spot, crying for their parents as they fled.

Zhang Yi paid them no mind. Instead, he walked over, flicked his finger, and severed the ropes binding Gao Tianwu.

"Th... thank you!"

Gao Tianwu gasped for breath, the air turning into thick white mist.

Zhang Yi said calmly, "If you're going to thank someone, do it properly. Let me ask you, that person you mentioned before, the one who could help you deal with the cockroaches, where is he?"

Gao Tianwu struggled to his feet.

He glanced at his brothers not far away.

Although Xiao Guang and the others were also in a sorry state and extremely weak, after putting on the padded jackets Zhang Yi provided, their complexions were visibly improving. At least they wouldn't die anytime soon.

Gao Tianwu looked at Zhang Yi and Liang Yue. "You two, thank you for saving me, Gao Tianwu, and my brothers!"

"I'll do anything you ask, even give you my life. But that person did our Gaoyuan Village a great kindness. I absolutely cannot casually reveal his personal information. I'm truly sorry."

Zhang Yi raised an eyebrow. "I didn't expect you to be quite principled? Don't worry, I just want to ask for his help clearing out some cockroaches. I have no other intentions."

"As long as he can help me with this, I can offer you an incredibly generous reward."

Chapter 1098: Mysterious Creatures Beneath the Glacier

Gao Tianwu heard Zhang Yi say this, and coupled with the fact that this person had saved his life, he said, "Alright then, but I need to ask him about this matter first. Please forgive me for this."

He bowed his head as he spoke, his words carrying a hint of apology.

Zhang Yi smiled indifferently; he wasn't in a hurry anyway, so he let Gao Tianwu make the arrangements as he pleased.

Gao Tianwu pointed at Xiao Guang and the others. "Benefactor, can I first arrange things for my brothers?"

Zhang Yi said, "As quickly as possible."

Gao Tianwu hurried over. Although he was also very weak and injured, he still struggled to help his brothers up one by one and took them into the house to warm up.

The entire Gaoyuan Village was now deathly silent. The villagers, panicked and terrified, had run back to their homes and were secretly watching the area in front of Gao Tianwu's house.

They were restless and uneasy, unsure of what to do now.

Would Gao Tianwu take revenge on them later?

They had no idea, but now, in this freezing, snowy world, leaving the village would also mean certain death very soon.

"This matter has nothing to do with us; it was all Meng Chuan's instigation. He shouldn't hate us."

"When the time comes, as long as we all go together to apologize to him, he probably won't hold a grudge against the entire village."

"Everyone just say some nice words, flatter him a bit, and maybe he'll forget about this whole thing."

The villagers comforted themselves with such thoughts, and their moods relaxed slightly.

Gao Tianwu carefully arranged for his brothers, having them lie down to rest, and lit the stove to warm them up.

After preparing everything, he finally walked out of the house and said to Zhang Yi and Liang Yue:

"You two, I can tell you're not ordinary people. So this time, I'll take you directly to find that friend!"

Zhang Yi smiled and nodded. "Smart."

Liang Yue asked in a low voice, "Why did he change his mind?"

Zhang Yi said, "In his current state, even if we really insisted on following him, he wouldn't be able to do anything about it. It's better to be generous and take us there proactively, which might earn him some goodwill."

Liang Yue nodded. "So that's how it is!"

Gao Tianwu led Zhang Yi and Liang Yue towards the northwest of the village.

As they walked, Zhang Yi chatted casually with him, asking lightly, "What are you planning to do about that village of yours later?"

If it were according to Zhang Yi's personality, if those guys had betrayed him, there would only be one outcome.

This point, the former neighbors from Yuelu Residential Complex should be very familiar with.

Gao Tianwu lowered his head, his expression very serious.

After a long while, he let out a deep sigh.

"What do they know? They're just a bunch of farmers with little experience, easily swayed and deceived."

"The mastermind behind this has already been killed by you two, and for that, I am extremely grateful."

"As for those fellow villagers, I won't do anything to them."

Hearing this, Zhang Yi initially felt somewhat scornful.

However, Gao Tianwu then changed his tone: "But I'm not a fool either! From now on, I will completely part ways with them, no more involvement!"

Zhang Yi nodded silently.

"You're quite an interesting person."

He felt this Gao Tianwu was indeed quite intriguing.

This person's character had some similarities with Old You; both had a bit of that overly nice, good-natured temperament, and a touch of idealism.

Fortunately, he wasn't stupid, otherwise wouldn't he have become like Liang Yue?

A person who could protect his village for three years during the apocalypse truly deserved respect.

The group strolled along, heading northwest. Zhang Yi wasn't in a hurry and didn't use his spatial teleportation ability.

Instead, he walked the whole way, chatting with this Gao Tianwu.

Unexpectedly, as the two talked, they found they actually got along quite well.

Gao Tianwu was one year younger than Zhang Yi. He had previously worked in Tianhai City, so their educational background and general knowledge were relatively similar.

After the apocalypse, Zhang Yi had always been on guard against everyone. This was the first time he had chatted like this with someone his own age.

The people around him either loved him or respected him, but there were few friends who could just chat normally with him.

Now, meeting Gao Tianwu was a rare opportunity to talk about casual, everyday matters.

However, this was also because Gao Tianwu appeared at the right time.

If it had been half a year ago, if Zhang Yi had encountered such a wild superhuman, he would have either kept his distance or simply killed them outright.

How could he be as calm and composed as he was now?

To put it bluntly, it was because his strength had grown, and his mindset had already changed.

After some casual conversation, Zhang Yi learned that both Gao Tianwu and his cousin Gao Changguang were superhumans.

It's just that the two of them had little contact with other superhumans, so they didn't have a strong concept of their own strength.

They only knew that they had experienced many battles, big and small, around Gaoyuan Village.

They had fought with neighboring villages, and with wandering bandits, but because of them, Gaoyuan Village had never suffered any major losses.

Zhang Yi began to feel some interest.

What has been most valuable since the apocalypse until now?

Talent is most valuable. Even the lofty Blizzard City has started recruiting talent from the Outer City.

And Tianhai City, after several large-scale battles, had long been depleted of talent. Zhang Yi also hoped to select a few trustworthy, powerful superhumans to help maintain order in Tianhai City.

So during the conversation, there was a bit of a probing, assessing flavor towards Gao Tianwu.

Facing Zhang Yi's inquiries, Gao Tianwu was well aware of the huge gap between himself and Zhang Yi, so he didn't hide much and answered truthfully.

"My ability is called [Five Guardians]. After I awakened my supernatural ability, I could control five different types of power..."

When Zhang Yi heard this, the look in his eyes towards Gao Tianwu had already changed somewhat.

Superhumans who could possess multiple abilities simultaneously belonged only to the most special [special-type]. Superhumans with this kind of ability were unpredictable, their powers bizarre and varied, and could not be simply classified.

And superhumans possessing this category of ability usually had a relatively high upper limit.

Zhang Yi silently noted this in his heart without making a fuss, planning to talk about it after meeting the person Gao Tianwu mentioned.

After more than ten minutes, Gao Tianwu brought Zhang Yi to a frozen lake.

The entire lake was frozen solid, with many holes on the surface, apparently left by villagers trying to chisel for fish.

But this, after all, wasn't the Egret River; there weren't many fish in this lake.

Zhang Yi looked around and couldn't help but ask, "Where is this friend you mentioned?"

As far as the eye could see, the surroundings were all wilderness, with no residential buildings in sight.

Gao Tianwu said, "Please wait a moment!"

As he spoke, he walked to the edge of the frozen lake, picked up a piece of broken ice, and began knocking on the lake surface.

"Thump, thump, thump!"

Three knocks each time, very rhythmic.

Zhang Yi was still puzzled in his heart. Could it be that the space under this frozen lake had been hollowed out, and someone lived there?

Just at that moment, a large amount of snow and ice suddenly erupted from one of the ice holes, and then a large, dark creature emerged from below, its two huge eyes looking in Zhang Yi's direction.

"Ribbit!"

Chapter 1099: Frog

Zhang Yi's eyes slowly widened, staring face to face with the pair of bright, shiny big eyes peeking out from the ice surface.

Although it was already nighttime, and the light on the ice wasn't very ample, that was clearly a large, dark, hulking figure, revealing a round, bulbous head.

Especially those eyes—they were actually bulging upward.

"Huh?"

A whole bunch of question marks filled Zhang Yi's mind.

What the heck was this thing?

Before Zhang Yi could open his mouth to ask, the large, dark figure leaped up from beneath the ice.

"Wow! Little Wu, long time no see! Are you here to bring me food again?"

"Ribbit! You really are such a kind-hearted person. If I had a daughter, I might even consider letting her marry you!"

It wasn't until it jumped out of the ice that Zhang Yi got a clear look at its appearance.

Under the faint moonlight and snow glow, its massive and rotund body was revealed, along with its long, slender limbs.

A huge frog!

It was completely covered in mud, yet it stood up like a human, hands on its hips as it spoke to Gao Tianwu.

"Superhuman? Mutated beast?"

Zhang Yi was a bit dumbfounded at this moment.

If it was human, why would it live in the mud?

If it was a mutated beast, how could it speak human language?

Liang Yue was also completely baffled, though due to a woman's instinctive aversion to amphibian creatures, she silently retreated behind Zhang Yi.

The frog also saw Zhang Yi, and its big eyes instantly lit up.

"Ribbit! Are these your friends, Little Wu? They look pretty interesting."

Gao Tianwu explained to the frog, "They are my benefactors. They just saved my life. They came here looking for you to ask for help!"

Gao Tianwu looked at Zhang Yi. "Mr. Zhang, this is the person I mentioned who can help you solve the cockroach problem."

After hearing the whole story, the frog rolled its big eyeballs, then strode toward Zhang Yi.

Its body was coated in thick mud, but it looked more like a natural protective layer to help it withstand the cold.

"Um... is that some kind of new fashion statement you're wearing?"

Zhang Yi kindly reminded it.

The frog looked at its own arms and only then realized it was covered in mud.

"Ribbit-ribbit! That seems rather impolite. Please wait a moment."

It took a few steps back, then vigorously shook its body. The mud quickly shook off.

Zhang Yi noticed its skin wasn't oily and smooth like a normal frog's, but rather covered in a layer of fine fuzz you could barely see unless you looked closely.

Beneath the fuzz was very thick fat. Clearly, this was its confidence for staying warm without clothing during this glacial epoch.

After shaking off the mud, the frog walked up to Zhang Yi like a person. Its eyes were huge, even a bit bigger than Zhang Yi's mouth when wide open.

Its large mouth also seemed perpetually upturned at the corners, looking as if it was always smiling.

"Ribbit-ribbit! Hello, my friend. I am Frog, um... my name is Haruki Murakami. You can also call me Village Chief! Ribbit-ribbit-ribbit! I really like that name, ribbit-ribbit-ribbit!"

Zhang Yi crossed his arms and suddenly laughed.

"Alright, at the very least, I can confirm you're a superhuman."

Because frogs can't read, and they certainly wouldn't give themselves a name like Haruki Murakami.

The frog shook its head. "Oh, that's not important."

Zhang Yi asked about its name again, but the frog just shook its head.

"What's past is no longer important. We must look forward, ribbit! So you can call me Village Chief."

Zhang Yi raised an eyebrow. "I think calling you Gama-kichi isn't bad either."

Hearing this, the frog actually stomped its feet in anger.

"Oh, no! I am a frog, not a toad! Ribbit-ribbit!"

Gao Tianwu hurriedly stepped in to smooth things over.

"Okay, okay, you're a frog. We all know that."

He turned his head and whispered to Zhang Yi, "Actually, I don't know his identity either. Ever since I met him, I've only known he hides at the bottom of this lake. He's never talked about his past."

"He might have frozen his brains silly and really thinks he's a frog now."

Zhang Yi stroked his chin. This big frog was kind of interesting.

"Frogs dealing with bugs? That seems promising."

He looked at the frog and inquired, "Hey, do you have a way to deal with cockroaches?"

The frog rubbed its head. "Cockroaches? Oh, I am Frog Village Chief! Dealing with bugs is my specialty!"

It raised one long finger. "Let me give you a little science fact: cockroaches are rich in protein and make excellent ingredients!"

"If you can find a large number of cockroaches now, I suggest you turn them into food. They taste like chicken, very good!"

Liang Yue's face was full of a twisted expression. Thinking about how the frog must have eaten plenty of cockroaches, she silently took a few more steps back.

Zhang Yi's throat also bobbed a few times.

"If you can handle those things, I'd like you to do me a favor. Because I have a lot of cockroaches that need dealing with."

"And after you help me with this, I'll give you other rewards as well."

To cut a long story short, Zhang Yi directly told them his identity.

He was the ruler of Tianhai City, currently the most powerful superhuman in the Jiangnan Region.

Gao Tianwu listened, stunned and dumbfounded, his whole person frozen in place.

After the apocalypse, although he had awakened his ability, he had always been active only in the area around Gaoyuan Village.

He had no channels to obtain information about the outside world.

The things Zhang Yi said sounded like a foreign language to him.

But this also stirred some desires in his heart.

Like Zhang Yi, he was just a child from an ordinary family.

Encountering this great upheaval in the world, he possessed an ability. If he could seize this opportunity and follow Zhang Yi...

Then perhaps one day, he could possess lofty fame, status, and power!

In a person's lifetime, there really aren't many chances to defy fate and change one's destiny.

Grasp it, and you'll live a life of wealth and glory. If you miss it, you might only be able to live your life step by step, following the routine.

Right now, he had no more attachments to Gaoyuan Village and was still considering where to go next.

Zhang Yi's appearance gave him an excellent opportunity!

So he couldn't help but step forward, his eyes burning like fire as he gazed at Zhang Yi.

"Mr. Zhang! You're saying Tianhai City is currently plagued with cockroaches everywhere, right?"

"Then, could you give us a chance to solve this problem!"

As he spoke, he slapped the frog on the shoulder.

The frog was stunned, looking at him with a dazed expression.

What does this have to do with me?

Zhang Yi smiled, crossing his arms and looking at him meaningfully.

"You? Can you handle it?"

Gao Tianwu gritted his teeth and declared loudly, "Give me food supplies! Ten days, ten days to clear Tianhai City of cockroaches!"