

Ice Age 181

Chapter 181: Truth Hidden Among Lies

Zhang Yi fell into silence. The current dilemma left him with no perfect solution. If he didn't kill Lu Fengda, he would be at the mercy of his blackmail. Lu Fengda, an old fox who had long dominated the business world, was far more skilled in scheming than he was.

Over time, Lu Fengda would only take more and more from Zhang Yi. But if he killed him, Zhang Yi worried about the risk of his secrets being exposed. It felt like a Trisolarans' dilemma: having the power to easily destroy the opponent but not daring to act out of fear.

Zhou Ke'er frowned slightly, also trying to come up with a solution for Zhang Yi. Feeling frustrated, Zhang Yi grabbed one of her white, tender feet, playing with it to help him think. Zhou Ke'er's face blushed, and her thoughts started to scatter. Her beautiful eyes showed a hint of seduction as she looked shyly at Zhang Yi.

"If we can't think of a solution, maybe we should relax first. There's no rush. We can pretend to cooperate with him for now and slowly figure out a countermeasure."

Zhang Yi shook his head. "Dragging it out too long isn't good for us. The key is, if I can't find a way to resolve this, I'll feel stifled."

Neither of them could come up with a good idea. At this moment, Yang Siya returned from the botanical garden. Seeing Zhang Yi looking so serious on the couch, she couldn't help but ask, "Is something wrong?"

Zhang Yi looked at Yang Siya. He still didn't fully trust her and hadn't planned to discuss this with her. However, an extra mind might bring more ideas, and Yang Siya, with her rich social experience and background as a boss, might offer some useful suggestions.

"Honey, come here! I need to discuss something with you."

Zhang Yi called Yang Siya over to sit beside him and briefly explained the situation. Hearing what Lu Fengda had done, Yang Siya also frowned deeply. "This is really tough! He's a very cunning person and must have precautions against you."

She sighed, "This is what we call 'a lie spreads fast, the truth takes time to catch up.' Those of us in the entertainment industry have suffered a lot from this. It's truly hateful!"

Yang Siya's offhand remark sparked an idea in Zhang Yi's mind. A flash of inspiration hit him.

"Wait a minute! You mentioned spreading lies?"

Yang Siya said, "Yes, isn't he spreading your information just like those unscrupulous media in the entertainment industry spreading rumors about celebrities?"

"He doesn't have any solid evidence, does he?" Zhou Ke'er snorted disdainfully.

"The problem is that even if it's a lie, once it's out of Lu Fengda's mouth, people will believe it."

Zhang Yi propped his chin on his hands, his mind racing. "Lu Fengda has my information, but it's not solid evidence. However, if spread, it could still cause trouble. We can't stop him from spreading it; we don't have a computer expert to counter it. But if we treat it as spreading rumors, we might have a way!"

Zhang Yi's eyes began to shine as a plan formed in his mind. Zhou Ke'er and Yang Siya looked at him curiously.

"What are you planning to do?"

Zhang Yi smiled mysteriously and didn't tell them. "I need to prepare first. I'll let you know when I'm ready!"

He kissed both women on the cheek. Having someone to brainstorm with was indeed better than racking his brain alone. He then left the living room and headed to the control room on the first floor. After closing the door and ensuring no one could disturb him, he took out his phone and dialed Lu Fengda's number.

The call was quickly answered. "Hey, Zhang Yi, is everything ready?"

Zhang Yi, sounding impatient and irritated, said, "Why are you so anxious? Do you really think I have that much stuff? Damn it, if you didn't have dirt on me, I'd kill you!"

Zhang Yi's hostile tone angered Lu Fengda, who laughed loudly, "You stupid kid! If you kill me, you won't last long either!"

"I'm telling you, don't even think about it. Once I'm dead, your information will automatically be sent to every phone in Tianhai City within 24 hours!"

"Imagine the consequences then!"

Within 24 hours. Zhang Yi quickly grasped the concept. It seemed Lu Fengda had set the information to auto-upload after their call.

"Hmph, you're ruthless! Wait for a while, and I'll send the stuff."

Zhang Yi hung up, a smile playing on his lips. He then turned on the supercomputer in the control room. This computer had a built-in server and could connect to the global internet via the Nebula Satellite Network, naturally covering Tianhai City. After a moment of thought, Zhang Yi devised a plan.

He didn't know much about computers but enough to use them. For instance, posting on the few remaining city forums and using mass messaging software to send messages to everyone.

"South China Walmart warehouse theft mystery solved—confirmed as internal theft, goods transferred back home early."

"Where did Walmart's hundred-billion-yuan goods go? According to eyewitnesses, armed forces appeared that night for a secret escort. Police remain silent."

"Revealed! Tianhai City's biggest theft case is connected to the snow disaster, with UFO sightings."

Zhang Yi racked his brain to create various sensational news. The best way to bury the truth was to hide it among a heap of lies, making it impossible to discern. It might not deceive everyone, but it would make most people think it was all nonsense. Thus, Lu Fengda's delayed information could not be trusted, greatly reducing Zhang Yi's exposure risk.

Zhang Yi edited and saved the content but didn't send it out immediately. The target audience was everyone in Tianhai City, the only ones who could pose a threat in this frozen world.

"So far, this should do it. I've done all I can. Whether it succeeds depends on fate!"

Zhang Yi prepared for the worst outcome. However, Lu Fengda had to die!

Chapter 182: Sniping

Zhang Yi followed Lu Fengda's instructions and packed the necessary supplies into a canvas bag. After gearing up, he carried the bag and walked towards Lu Fengda's residence.

Zhang Yi was extremely cautious, holding a riot shield to prevent potential gunfire from Lu Fengda. Step by step, he approached Villa 302, placed the canvas bag on the steps at the front door, and then walked away from the villa. He went a considerable distance before hiding behind a pine tree. The branches, covered with snow, provided excellent visual cover.

In his hands appeared a sniper rifle wrapped in white cloth. This was no longer the police sniper rifle he had used before but a military model with better adaptability to extreme environments, ensuring optimal performance.

Kneeling and using a branch as a support, he aimed at the canvas bag at the door. From 500 meters away, as soon as Lu Fengda appeared, he could take the shot.

After making all the preparations, Zhang Yi took out his phone and texted Lu Fengda, "The items are at your door."

There was no response. Zhang Yi frowned slightly, holding the gun, waiting quietly for Lu Fengda to appear. However, there was no movement from the house after a long time.

"Hmm?" Zhang Yi found this unusual. Was it possible that the old man hadn't received the message? Instinctively, he wanted to call Lu Fengda, but he stopped himself when he touched his phone.

"No, if I call or send another message, it would imply that I know he hasn't picked up the items yet. If he's doing this on purpose, he'll suspect I'm nearby."

Zhang Yi took a slow breath, his eyes still glued to the scope. "Wait a bit longer! He wouldn't risk his life to contact me for supplies if he wasn't going to come out. Unless he's already dead."

Zhang Yi kept kneeling, never taking his eyes off the canvas bag. Luckily, he wore the best winter gear, or his right leg would have frozen within ten minutes.

Minutes passed slowly. After about fifteen minutes, the door to Villa 302 finally opened slowly. The barrel of a double-barreled shotgun cautiously scanned the surroundings before a short old man emerged from the house.

Lu Fengda's face was easily recognizable to anyone who had been online, confirming his identity immediately. He looked down at the canvas bag, preparing to pick it up.

"Bang!" The deafening sound echoed through the neighborhood as Lu Fengda's head was blown open, his body collapsing and crashing against the door before falling heavily to the ground.

Seeing the successful hit, Zhang Yi quickly packed up his sniper rifle and pulled out an assault rifle, charging towards Villa 302. He first shot Lu Fengda in the head again, then decisively rushed into the house.

Lu Fengda's villa wasn't as large as Wang Siming's shelter, but it was still spacious. Zhang Yi was looking for the computer capable of sending timed messages. He searched every corner, destroying any electronic device he found immediately.

He quickly reached Lu Fengda's room, where he saw a large computer tower and three monitors on a workbench. Raising the butt of his gun, Zhang Yi was about to smash it but hesitated.

Lu Fengda's computer was likely valuable and contained precious data. "I'll store it in my alternate space; the information inside won't be able to be sent out that way!" Zhang Yi was frugal, never wasting even a grain of rice, so he stored the entire computer in his alternate space.

After doing this, Zhang Yi exhaled deeply. "Now, it's up to fate!" He had destroyed all physical devices, but Lu Fengda might still use cloud-based technology. Zhang Yi wasn't familiar with high-tech computer systems and was unsure if Lu Fengda could manage this.

Given that Lu Fengda was a top computer expert in the country, this was a strong possibility. "I need to get back and spread disinformation online. Even if my info gets out, I need to create enough confusion to cover my tracks."

Zhang Yi left Lu Fengda's house, leaving his corpse with blood already frozen into crimson ice crystals at the door. He searched the body, finding an expensive Patek Philippe watch worth at least millions, and a high-quality jade Guanyin pendant, worn so much it had developed a patina. He also found a phone in his pocket. Zhang Yi tossed the Patek Philippe watch and phone into his alternate space but left the jade pendant with Lu Fengda as a burial item.

In the apocalypse, luxury items were less valuable than a piece of bread. Zhang Yi then returned to the shelter and began spreading disinformation online. By the time he finished, night had fallen.

Zhang Yi cracked his neck, stretching as he left the control room. Zhou Ke'er approached, concerned. "Zhang Yi, what have you been doing in there for so long? You must be hungry. I made bullwhip stew and chicken soup. Come have some!"

Zhang Yi smiled, "Sure, I am a bit hungry." Having two considerate women at home made life worth protecting at all costs.

Yang Siya was also in the living room. They knew Zhang Yi was handling something crucial, so they waited for him to finish. Zhang Yi sat at the table; one woman handed him chopsticks while the other served him soup.

As Zhang Yi drank the soup, he asked, "Have you received any messages on your phones?"

Zhou Ke'er and Yang Siya both said they had received messages about a theft at a Walmart warehouse. "A bunch of random stuff, several messages. We don't know what it means!" Zhou Ke'er looked puzzled at her phone.

Yang Siya added, "It seems like someone's trying to cover something up."

Zhang Yi took a sip of turtle soup. The soup was indeed delicious. "Exactly, it's a cover-up. Those are the smokescreens I released."

Over the next 48 hours, hundreds of messages would be sent across Tianhai City's social forums and to everyone's phones. Since he couldn't completely prevent Lu Fengda from sending messages, he would bury the truth in a sea of useless information.

Chapter 183: Setting Traps

Zhou Ke'er, resting her chin in her hands, pondered aloud, "But won't this just make people more suspicious?"

Yang Siya also frowned slightly. "Yeah, suddenly stirring up this topic could easily draw attention."

Zhang Yi ate a fish ball and replied calmly, "Attracting attention is unavoidable. Whether I send these messages or not, Lu Fengda will spread information anyway. By releasing these smokescreens, I can confuse the situation. With so much information out there, I doubt anyone has the energy to verify each piece."

He sipped his soup. "Moreover, compared to the big organizations and enterprises in Tianhai City mentioned in the messages, the possibility of me acting alone becomes the least likely."

Yang Siya's eyes lit up as she looked at Zhang Yi. "That's really smart! It's like in our entertainment industry. If a scandal breaks out but a bigger celebrity makes headlines, the previous story quickly gets forgotten."

She leaned on the table, her small, white hands propping up her chin, inadvertently revealing her impressive cleavage, showing a large expanse of fair skin and deep valleys. As she gazed at Zhang Yi's profile, a look of admiration appeared in her eyes. It seemed the man before her was not only handsome and capable but also very clever.

At that moment, Zhou Ke'er looked at the information on her phone and tilted her head. "But all these messages are coming from your computer. If someone traces the IP address, won't they find you immediately?"

Yang Siya's expression changed subtlety. She was right. Whether Zhang Yi sent the messages anonymously or from multiple accounts, the IP address remained unique. If someone with the right skills or organizational capabilities investigated, they could easily pinpoint Zhang Yi as the culprit. His suspicion would then be the greatest.

Zhang Yi's face remained impassive as he continued drinking his soup. Zhou Ke'er sensed the tension and quickly apologized. "I didn't mean it like that! Given that there are probably very few people left alive in Tianhai City, and even fewer who understand how to trace IP addresses, your approach is still very successful, Zhang Yi!"

Zhang Yi took another sip of soup, picked up a piece of turtle shell, and began to gnaw on the skin. In a composed tone, he said, "Unless the world reverts to a primitive state, or we live like cavemen, it's impossible to hide our tracks completely. I never expected to deceive everyone entirely. But by doing this, I can at least make most people less likely to suspect me first."

"As for those powerful organizations with strong network capabilities, it's inevitable that we'll come into contact with them."

Zhang Yi had already come to terms with this. Even in an apocalyptic world, network communications still existed, and finding someone was not too difficult for high-level officials. If not for the unexpected appearance of Lu Fengda, Zhang Yi thought he could have enjoyed a peaceful year or so. Instead, his tranquil life was disrupted in less than half a month.

He had no regrets. He despised feeling coerced, so killing Lu Fengda was a necessary action.

"And although I dislike the idea of anyone discovering our shelter's location, with this stronghold, no one can threaten our safety unless they have top-tier armed forces."

His combat skills and an almost inexhaustible supply of food and a shelter built for \$1 billion, capable of withstanding nuclear attacks, were his ultimate safeguards.

Seeing Zhang Yi's calm demeanor, Zhou Ke'er and Yang Siya felt reassured. No matter how smart they were, they were still women. In times of crisis, most women tend to rely on men, except a few strong individuals.

"Knowing you have things under control, we feel at ease!" Yang Siya said, patting her ample chest with a happy expression.

Zhang Yi glanced at her with a smile. "Don't be too happy yet! While I'm confident in defending this home, you can't just sit idly by!"

Yang Siya blushed, gently biting her lip and glancing at Zhang Yi, hinting that others were present. Zhang Yi felt a bit speechless. Good grief, was that all she thought about?

In reality, Yang Siya was quite innocent. She felt she couldn't help Zhang Yi much, aside from doing household chores every day.

Raising his hand, Zhang Yi flicked her smooth forehead. "I need you to help me set traps!"

"Ouch!" Yang Siya covered her forehead, casting a reproachful look at Zhang Yi. She and Zhou Ke'er looked at him in confusion. "Traps?"

Zhang Yi nodded. "This house has incredible defensive capabilities, built to withstand nuclear war or large-scale natural disasters. But it lacks adequate defense against human threats, which is understandable given Huagu's strict weapon controls."

"So, I plan to set up tight traps around the shelter."

A cold glint flashed in his eyes. "If anyone dares to come after us, they'll never leave!"

Zhou Ke'er immediately nodded. "Zhang Yi, tell me what I can do to help!"

Ever since Yang Siya arrived, Zhou Ke'er had felt a growing sense of urgency, becoming more proactive in helping Zhang Yi.

Yang Siya added quickly, "I don't know much about traps, but I'll do my best with whatever task you give me!"

Zhang Yi nodded. "Alright then."

He retrieved a large pile of items from his alternate space, mostly hardware products.

"Clatter—"

The floor was soon covered with items, including dozens of boxes of steel nails as long as a palm, ropes, steel wires, and animal traps. The two women were dazzled by the array.

Zhang Yi picked up a 20-centimeter steel nail from the floor and said, "Setting traps in this snowy terrain is the hardest for anyone to notice!"

"Let me teach you how to do it. Listen carefully and remember the positions when setting the traps. Otherwise, if we accidentally fall into our own traps one day, it'll be disastrous!"

Chapter 184: Setting Traps

Zhou Ke'er and Yang Siya realized that real danger might be approaching, making them extremely vigilant and focused on learning. Zhang Yi took out a wooden board and a hammer. "Nails scattered on the ground won't hurt anyone! So, you need to nail them to the boards. Once buried in the snow, they can instantly pierce through someone's foot!"

"But using just nails isn't enough. They're too smooth and can be easily pulled out." Zhang Yi explained while taking out a box of long screws. "Combine these with the nails. The nails have better penetration, while the screws increase the damage. Understand?"

The two women listened attentively. Seeing the sharp nails and the spiral grooves on the screws, they could imagine the excruciating pain when pulled out, taking chunks of flesh with them. Yang Siya's feet instinctively curled up at the thought of such pain, while Zhou Ke'er, being a doctor, was more composed.

Zhang Yi took a few minutes to craft a simple trap with the board and nails. "We need to make at least 1000 of these nail traps! Spread them within a 100-meter radius around the villa!"

Next, he pulled out a large animal trap with jagged, sharp teeth that looked terrifying. "You've seen these on TV. They can snap a wolf's leg clean off. For humans, it can pierce through flesh and hit bone, essentially incapacitating a person."

"These need to be placed within the inner ring of the nail traps to avoid being detected by probing tools."

"You two handle these traps while I take care of the rest!" Zhang Yi instructed.

Zhou Ke'er and Yang Siya nodded and started making the nail traps, hammering away diligently. Zhang Yi was also busy, observing the terrain outside from a window. The only routes to Villa 101 were two pathways. Zhang Yi recalled finding two explosive landmines in the Tianhai City military armory, perfect for burying in these routes.

Caution was paramount; the mines could destroy tanks and armored vehicles, let alone people. Zhang Yi realized the traps' first use would be the most effective. If someone used tools to clear the nails, he needed a countermeasure.

After half a day, the three finished making 1000 nail traps. Yang Siya's hands were blistered, but she didn't complain, knowing her value to Zhang Yi was less than Zhou Ke'er, a doctor. She needed to prove her worth to maintain Zhang Yi's favor.

Zhang Yi appreciated her effort, even if he didn't say it. "Alright, let's get to work!"

They put on their winter gear and went outside to set the traps around Villa 101. Zhang Yi meticulously supervised their placement and corrected any mistakes.

"The nail boards shouldn't be too loose! Ideally, when someone steps on one, they fall and land on another, which could pierce their chest, face, or neck, killing them instantly."

"Bury the boards just enough to cover them. The snow will hide them completely soon."

Despite this being Zhang Yi's first time setting traps like these, his survival experience in the cutthroat environment of Yuelu District had given him a wealth of knowledge in killing enemies effectively.

Zhou Ke'er and Yang Siya followed his instructions carefully, though they were nervous about stepping on the traps themselves. Zhang Yi kept a close watch to ensure their safety.

Once the nail traps and animal traps were set, Zhang Yi cautiously avoided them and moved to the two pathways. Using an entrenching tool, he dug two deep pits over a meter deep and carefully placed the explosive mines inside.

Fully armored for safety, with a dimensional gate ready to absorb most of the blast if something went wrong, he buried the mines and smoothed the surface with snow to leave no trace.

These remote-detонated mines wouldn't go off from pressure but could be triggered electronically by Zhang Yi when needed, making them perfect for ambushing large groups or powerful enemies.

Next, Zhang Yi devised a plan to prevent anyone from clearing the traps with tools. He tied steel wires to grenade pins and buried them in the snow. Whether kicked or triggered by tools, these would explode, creating further obstacles.

After meticulously placing about 30 grenade traps around Villa 101, Zhang Yi ensured that anyone approaching would have to sacrifice many lives, possibly dozens.

"That should do it," Zhang Yi muttered, exhaling a breath of white steam. The traps might be less effective against professional armed forces, but approaching the villa would be lethal for untrained enemies.

Zhang Yi had two more defenses besides the traps. He glanced back at the fortress-like shelter, its 10-meter-long tunnel equipped with sleep gas, tear gas, and high-temperature flamethrowers capable of melting steel.

And the final line of defense was Zhang Yi himself.

Chapter 185: Waiting

After setting up the traps, the three of them returned to the room.

Yang Siya and Zhou Ke'er were participating in this kind of dangerous activity for the first time. Moreover, someone might die because of the traps they set up. This feeling made them extremely nervous, but also inexplicably excited. After all, they had never experienced anything like this before. Yang Siya's eyes sparkled with a complex light, even showing some eagerness.

"Zhang Yi, when will the enemy come?" Yang Siya asked, her eyes filled with anticipation.

Zhang Yi couldn't help but laugh at her hopeful expression. "I wish I had wasted my efforts, but you seem to be hoping they will attack us."

"However, it probably won't be soon," he added, pointing to his head. "Anyone with a bit of sense wouldn't easily attack at a time like this. Anyone who has survived until now isn't simple."

Yang Siya propped her chin on her hand, looking out the window. "Is that so?" She wasn't sure if she wanted someone to step on her traps or if she preferred to stay in a peaceful yet boring safe environment.

As she was lost in thought, she suddenly heard a piercing noise. Turning her head, she saw Zhang Yi installing door bolts with a welding machine in the corridor.

"What are you doing? Aren't these two thick metal doors secure enough?" she asked.

Zhang Yi thought of the late Lu Fengda. Continuing to install the door bolts on both sides of the corridor, he replied, "Most areas of this villa are automated. Someone who hacks into our control center could easily open these two doors. Sometimes, technological advancements bring great flaws, but the basic principles of physics don't lie!"

He installed three door bolts in the corridor, each inserted with ten-centimeter thick construction steel bars. Even if someone got to the corridor, breaking all three steel bars in a short time would be impossible.

"Better safe than sorry!" Zhang Yi said, taking a deep breath with a serious expression.

Seeing how cautious Zhang Yi was, Yang Siya felt somewhat speechless, while Zhou Ke'er, already used to it, looked at Zhang Yi with admiration in her eyes. Thinking carefully, Yang Siya realized that Zhang Yi's actions made sense. A very cautious and death-fearing man might live longer than the average person.

Looking at the layout inside and outside the shelter, Zhang Yi felt much more at ease. The only thing that still worried him was network security.

"It would be great to have a network expert here!" Zhang Yi couldn't help but mutter.

Hearing this, a hint of sadness appeared on Yang Siya's face. "Xinxin is pretty good with networks. Unfortunately..."

Zhang Yi looked over at her. "What happened?"

Zhou Ke'er suddenly remembered something and asked Yang Siya, "Isn't Xinxin studying in Tianhai City? Do you know how she's doing? Is she... still alive?" Zhou Ke'er's voice grew weaker as she spoke.

Under the blizzard, how many people could survive? If not for meeting Zhang Yi, she might have become a frozen corpse by now, or worse, someone's food.

Seeing Zhang Yi's questioning gaze, Zhou Ke'er explained. Yang Siya had a cousin, Yang Xinxin, who studied in Tianhai City. Yang's family was well-educated; everyone was a genius except for Yang Siya, who entered the entertainment industry due to poor academic performance. Zhou Ke'er, for instance, had already earned a PhD from a top medical school at 26 and was a chief physician in a top-tier hospital.

Yang Xinxin, 18, attended Tianqing Academy, a prestigious school in Tianhai City. Despite her physical disability due to polio, she was exceptionally smart with a talent for computers, winning numerous international awards by 16. According to Zhou Ke'er, she was also a top hacker, responsible for hacking the White House's website two years ago and placing the Chinese flag on it.

Hearing Zhou Ke'er's story, Zhang Yi couldn't help but marvel at the disparity between people.

"So, where is she now? Can you find her?" Zhang Yi urgently needed a computer expert to secure his network.

Yang Siya, closing her eyes in pain, slowly shook her head. "She's been out of contact for a long time. After the snowstorm hit, I tried to reach her, but there's been no word. She would have found a way to contact me if she were alive. The fact that she hasn't..."

Yang Siya's voice choked, her eyes tearing up as she turned away. Zhou Ke'er, too, looked sad. Although she didn't often contact Yang Xinxin, they were still cousins.

Zhang Yi thought for a moment, then said to Yang Siya, "Maybe she just doesn't want to deal with you?"

"Huh?" Yang Siya expected comfort but was surprised by his nonsensical question.

Angrily stomping her foot, she shouted, "Why are you saying that?"

Zhang Yi replied calmly, "Think about it: everyone in your family is a genius, but you're just a fool in their eyes. If they were in trouble, who would seek your help?"

"You... you're so mean!" Yang Siya couldn't help but punch Zhang Yi lightly in the chest. It felt good.

Keep going!

The previously heavy atmosphere lightened up. Zhang Yi still felt some regret. If Yang Xinxin were still alive, having her join the team would be beneficial. Being paralyzed, she wouldn't threaten him much, and given Yang Siya and Zhou Ke'er's beauty, she probably wasn't bad-looking either. Genes don't lie!

"Such a pity!" Zhang Yi sighed. But since he couldn't get what he wanted, there was no point in dwelling on it. The shelter already had a strong firewall. Without a top network expert, it wouldn't be easily breached.

"From now on, we have only one task—wait!" Zhang Yi said, squinting his eyes deeply.

Chapter 186: Developing Superpowers

Everything that happened next unfolded exactly as Zhang Yi had predicted. As it turned out, Lu Fengda had set up an automatic message-sending program. Twenty-two hours after his death, the program sent a message to everyone in Tianhai City. The content of the message revealed Zhang Yi's identity, current location, and the news that he might possess a large amount of stolen goods from the Walmart warehouse.

Zhang Yi had been expecting this message. When he finally saw it, he felt a strange sense of relief.

According to Lu Fengda's message, it only mentioned that "Zhang Yi possesses some of the stolen goods from the Walmart warehouse, a significant quantity." The term "significant quantity" did not mean "all," and it wasn't quantified. After all, Lu Fengda himself had no idea how much Zhang Yi actually had, and he couldn't have imagined that Zhang Yi possessed a space superpower.

"This is a good thing! At least it lowers the level of danger I'm facing," Zhang Yi thought. In this age of extreme scarcity, if people knew he had an entire super warehouse's worth of supplies, no one in the world would remain calm. However, Zhang Yi had already buried Lu Fengda's message under a sea of fake information. Ordinary people or forces would find it difficult to discern the truth from the mass of misinformation.

"If someone can find me, they definitely aren't ordinary, or they have a computer expert," Zhang Yi murmured. But all of this was within his calculations, so it was unsurprising.

Zhang Yi put his phone aside and looked at a target 400 meters away. A target at this distance looked no bigger than a mosquito's head. Yet, it already had seven or eight arrows stuck in it.

Zhang Yi raised his high-tech compound bow with his left hand and took an arrow from the quiver at his waist with his right hand, placing it on the bowstring. Thanks to the pulley system, drawing the compound bow was quite easy. His gaze was intensely focused, and a strange power surged into his right eye, attaching itself to the arrow with his will.

"Whoosh!" The arrow flew out swiftly, seemingly wrapped in an invisible force that made it fly even faster. "Thud!" The arrow hit the target squarely in the center, its tail shaking violently.

After more than half a month of relentless training, Zhang Yi had developed some new abilities from his superpowers. This was an extension of his "precision shooting" ability, a power that could affect space. By deliberately attaching his superpower to objects, he could enhance their power. For flying objects, it also increased accuracy, as if he could influence their movement in space with his will.

For instance, the effective range of his highly accurate compound bow was originally 200 meters. But with his superpower, the range extended to 400 meters! This level of precision rivaled that of a regular sniper rifle. And when Zhang Yi used a sniper rifle, its power naturally doubled.

The bow and arrow were merely training tools. In a real fight, using a gun would undoubtedly be more efficient. But through continuous practice, his precision shooting ability had given him a pleasant surprise. By amplifying the accuracy and power of flying objects, he wondered what would happen if he applied this ability to melee weapons or even his own body.

This thought quickly became an obsession. Zhang Yi started experimenting on himself bit by bit. The results were astonishing! His accuracy undoubtedly improved. For example, he could precisely chop a vertically standing coin with a hunting knife. Moreover, when he wrapped himself in his superpower, air resistance greatly decreased, allowing him to move at twice his normal speed.

As a famous naval admiral once said, "Speed is power." Although his physical strength hadn't increased, doubling his speed also doubled his destructive power. Faster speed also meant better evasion, making escaping much easier.

"My superpower may seem simple, but it has limitless potential for development," Zhang Yi thought, increasingly pleased with his abilities. He felt that he had only scratched the surface and that many more abilities were yet to be fully developed. What would it be like if he could completely master his superpowers? He couldn't even imagine.

"Grumble—" Zhang Yi's stomach suddenly growled. Rubbing his belly, a wave of uncontrollable hunger hit him. Zhang Yi stuffed two chocolate bars from his space into his mouth. Although the newly developed abilities were exciting, they were also extremely energy-consuming. Power came from cells, and since he couldn't photosynthesize, he had to gain energy from food. Using his powers required eating more to replenish his strength.

As he munched on the high-calorie chocolate bars, Zhang Yi thought, "Even for superhumans, food is essential to replenish strength. In other words, no matter how powerful we are, without enough food, we can't use our superpowers."

He suddenly laughed, "Who would have thought that in the end, the decisive factor for the strength of superhumans would still be the amount of food?"

Looking at the massive training ground, Zhang Yi squinted his eyes contentedly. "In that case, doesn't that make me invincible?" At least in a battle of attrition, he was unbeatable.

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Everyone still alive in Tianhai City recently received countless messages about the theft at Walmart's South China warehouse. These messages were overwhelming, with hundreds arriving in just two days. Most people were puzzled, not knowing where these messages came from or what they meant. However, some astute individuals sensed something was amiss. After all, all the platforms that generated spam messages were gone, and very few could spread messages so widely.

The words "Walmart warehouse" carried immense allure at such a time. When the incident happened, it caused a huge stir in Tianhai City. It was said that the stolen goods were worth billions!

"If we could find those supplies, we could live comfortably in this post-apocalyptic world!" Many people reached the same conclusion.

Chapter 187: The West Hill Base

The widespread rumors caught the attention of some keen individuals. They sensed that these rumors were deliberately concealing something. However, with hundreds of messages, they couldn't verify each one, leaving most people helpless. Yet, some managed to extract useful information through analysis.

Fifty-two kilometers west of Cloud Manor lies the West Hill area, named after the mountain range. Since the 1960s, Tianhai City officials had built shelters across various locations. Initially, the goal was air defense and protection against nuclear attacks. According to data, Tianhai City now has 356 shelters. However, most of these shelters are simple air raid shelters and underground emergency facilities, lacking substantial food supplies and being quite basic in construction. These are for ordinary city residents.

In contrast, special shelters for military and high-ranking officials were far superior in security and resource supply. One such shelter lay 200 meters underground in West Hill. Although the entire West Hill was now covered in snow, many people still lived underground. This vast underground facility could accommodate over ten thousand people and resembles a grand subterranean city. Constructed from the sturdiest alloy, it was like an underground fortress.

Inside the West Hill organization's leader's office, a middle-aged man in a gray Zhongshan suit with slicked-back hair was reading a document behind a mahogany desk. A cup of hot tea was beside him, and the room's temperature was pleasant, making it impossible to feel the cold outside. The room's decor was antique, with even the centuries-old bookshelves. This man was Chen Xinian, a former high-ranking official of Tianhai City and now the leader of the West Hill organization.

Chen Xinian glanced occasionally at the computer screen on his desk while reviewing the document in his hand.

"Is the base's energy problem still unresolved?" he muttered.

"The power supply can be supplemented by the people in the Fourth Life Pod generating electricity, but without access to large amounts of fossil fuel, the troops can only travel by foot or dog sled."

"And relying solely on manpower to generate electricity won't cover the future energy shortfall of the base," he mused. Quickly, he devised a solution. He picked up his Hero pen and wrote his directive on the document.

"Increase the working hours in the Fourth Life Pod to 12 hours daily to earn nutrient solutions. Additionally, cut off their power supply for six hours each night to reduce unnecessary energy consumption."

After signing the document, Chen Xinian placed it on a pile of papers on his desk. Just then, his secretary, Ge Rou, knocked and entered, placing a report in front of him.

"Leader, we have results regarding the previously received information."

"Most of the messages originated from Villa 101, Cloud Manor, in Lijiang District. However, one message came from the phone of Lu Fengda, Chairman of Zhiyun Technology, located at Villa 302 in Cloud Manor."

Chen Xinian nonchalantly accepted the report. "Tell me about Zhang Yi mentioned in this message."

He was too lazy to read the detailed report, so he focused when he heard Lu Fengda's name. Ge Rou recited Zhang Yi's information meticulously. When Chen Xinian learned that Zhang Yi was merely a small manager at a Walmart warehouse in Tianhai City, his interest waned.

"A mere warehouse supervisor couldn't be behind this. Even if he gained something, it wouldn't be significant."

"He probably embezzled supplies during his tenure and has been living off those stolen goods," Ge Rou added, nodding in agreement.

Chen Xinian smiled knowingly. "This is all a plot by the Americans. They must have sensed something was wrong before the gamma rays arrived and hoarded supplies. But trying to create supernatural events is just self-deception!"

Ge Rou flattered him, "How could they know their foolish actions had long been seen through by you, Leader?"

"Should we investigate Zhang Yi?" Ge Rou asked.

Chen Xinian tapped his desk thoughtfully. "Send a few people to check out Lijiang District. We haven't searched that area yet. We might find some supplies."

Ge Rou nodded, "I'll arrange for a team to investigate immediately!"

This matter wasn't of great concern to Chen Xinian, and Ge Rou went to make the necessary arrangements.

Xu Family Town, Xu Dong Village. The villagers received those hundreds of messages, too. The messages were no different from spam for these long-isolated villagers, and they didn't pay much attention. Instead, the constant notifications irritated them.

Only one person took it seriously—Xu Chunlei, the top fighter of Xu Dong Village and an ice-elemental ability user. After his last fight with Zhang Yi, he had warned the villagers about Zhang Yi's formidable strength. Despite their resentment over their kinsmen's deaths, the villagers, led by Xu Dongsheng, decided to lay low temporarily due to their fear of Zhang Yi.

Life in Xu Dong Village returned to normal. It was sustained by stockpiled vegetables and grains and fishing on the ice, which ensured they didn't worry about food.

However, the otaku Xu Chunlei was deeply troubled. "Wasn't I supposed to be the chosen one, with top-tier abilities and countless beauties at my command? Why do I have to run when facing him?"

His frustration was compounded by the villagers' disappointment in him, which stung his sensitive nature. So, upon receiving a lot of information and noticing the mention of Cloud Manor, he suspected a connection to the mysterious figure who had scared him off.

"What if I analyze this information and find something useful?"

Xu Chunlei, being a computer-savvy otaku, decided to dig into the data, having little else to occupy his time. He was a disciplined person, limiting himself to only five or six "self-rewards" a day. With plenty of free time, he began analyzing the messages.

Chapter 188: Xu Chunlei Discovers a Secret

"I... I found it!" Xu Chunlei exclaimed excitedly as he sat in front of his computer. He adjusted his glasses, his chubby body shaking with excitement. Zhang Yi wasn't skilled with computers, so he hadn't encrypted the messages he sent. Cracking Zhang Yi's IP address was easy for Xu Chunlei, and he quickly discovered that the hundreds of recent messages originated from two IP addresses. Most came from a single computer, with only one message from a different IP address.

Following this lead, Xu Chunlei easily uncovered Zhang Yi's identity. "Zhang Yi, Walmart warehouse supervisor..." The name sparked a glint in Xu Chunlei's eyes, and his excitement grew. "The Walmart warehouse theft! Over a billion worth of goods were emptied overnight!" He had once thought it was a case of the thief crying "thief," but now it seemed this Zhang Yi was highly suspicious.

Xu Chunlei, an anime and manga enthusiast with a wild imagination, got up and paced the room, his chubby body wobbling with each step. After a few steps, he got tired and plopped back into his chair. "Could he really have emptied the entire Walmart warehouse?" he pondered. "With abilities like these, anything previously impossible becomes plausible. But to pull off such a feat, he'd need spatial abilities, like a vacuum cleaner capable of holding vast amounts of items."

He remembered the fight where his attacks suddenly vanished in front of Zhang Yi but were later returned. "It's not just about deflecting attacks; it's like storing them somewhere and releasing them later," Xu Chunlei thought, his eyes shining brighter. "I get it! He must have spatial abilities, and all the stolen goods from the Walmart warehouse are probably in his hands! That would also explain how he owns a luxurious snowmobile, which is rare in the south."

Xu Chunlei's face quivered with excitement. But then, reality set in, and he slumped back into his chair, feeling disappointed. "Compared to his abilities, my 'Snow Blast' is not on the same level. Could it be that he is the protagonist, and I'm... the villain?" This thought sent chills down his spine as he recalled countless games he had played.

"In games, there are always mini-bosses—tougher than regular enemies but ultimately there to give players experience points." Realizing his inferiority, Xu Chunlei grew fearful. "I must never cross him again. I should try to befriend him instead. And I need to warn the whole village not to provoke him!"

Worried about the village's daredevils, Xu Chunlei left his house immediately to find Xu Dongsheng, the village head and patriarch of the Xu family. Xu Dongsheng greeted him warmly, surprised to see him out. "Chunlei, it's rare to see you outside! If it weren't for your mother making you go for a walk, you'd never leave the house."

Gasping for breath, Xu Chunlei said, "Grandpa, something big has happened, and I need to tell you."

Xu Dongsheng stroked his beard and smiled, "Oh, what's the big news?" Usually, he wouldn't take Xu Chunlei's words seriously, but given Chunlei's abilities, Xu Dongsheng decided to listen.

Xu Chunlei urgently shared his findings with Xu Dongsheng. "Grandpa, Zhang Yi is very powerful. His abilities counter mine completely. We must avoid any conflict with him!"

"Xu Dong Village is just across the river from Cloud Manor. You should inform the villagers to stay away from that place, even when fishing!" he advised.

Xu Dongsheng, however, was fixated on another detail. "So, you're saying that the Walmart warehouse theft was his doing? And the stolen goods worth billions are with him?"

Xu Chunlei, in his earnestness, nodded, "Based on my analysis, that's the most likely scenario! Only a spatial ability user could empty a giant warehouse in such a short time!"

Confirming this, Xu Dongsheng's eyes sparkled with a sly glint. He stroked his beard and mused, "If we could get those supplies for Xu Dong Village, they would last us years!"

Realizing where the conversation was heading, Xu Chunlei grew alarmed. "Grandpa, you mustn't get any ideas about him!"

Xu Dongsheng dismissed his caution. "Chunlei, you're too timid! Our village has hundreds of residents and thousands more in Xu Family Town! Do you think one person can stand against so many?"

Xu Chunlei hesitated, unable to argue. "But I can feel that he is very dangerous!"

Scoffing, Xu Dongsheng replied, "He has broken your courage! In my youth, the nearby villages fought fiercely, often dragging back the dead. We fought over water, land, and even minor disputes!"

Recalling those times fondly, he continued, "For the survival of Xu Dong Village, we would give our lives!"

Chapter 189: A Snake Swallows an Elephant

Xu Chunlei looked at Xu Dongsheng that firm expression, heart regret. He had not thought that his kindness had brought about such a result. "Third Grandpa, that man has a gun in his hand! And he has powers, too. Going after him will kill a lot of people." "We have food now and we can survive." "Is it really worth it?" Xu Dongsheng took a deep breath, coldly reprimanded, "What do you know?" "It is freezing and no food crops can be grown. We're just living off our past." "But what happens when the grain runs out?" "We Xu family have to carry on the family line in the future, how can we dare to have children without food?" Xu Dongsheng raised his head and looked

helplessly at the sky. "I have not been without great disasters. At a time like this, you can only care about the people around you." "To rob, to kill, are in order to live, and the reproduction of the family ah!" Xu Chunlei also want to say something, three grandpa stared at him directly. "Well, don't say any more! Then you will do what I tell you to do." "As a person with the best genes in the Xu family, I will arrange several women for you to have children." And you can choose what you want first!" Xu Chunlei's scalp was tingling. This is not the end he wanted! At the thought of Zhang Yi's ability, he is also afraid. Xu Chunlei is very afraid of death! He

's cowardly, but what's wrong with that? If he dies, he will no longer be able to reward himself with those two-dimensional idols on the hard drive. His Akizuki Ari, Manaka Ayuki, Haruno Yuu, Naigisaka Haruka, Shirayu Rinkin, Kuwanazuki, Sawa Kariwa, Madiwa Rika... Will never be seen again. No, he would never allow such a world to exist! Fatty Xu clenched his fists and shook slightly. Seeing his strange appearance, Xu Dongsheng asked curiously: "Are you holding in urine?" Go and find a place to go to the toilet before your bladder is full." 'That's not true! Xu Chunlei suddenly loud. "I... I'm not going to fight that man! I can't fight him!" Xu Chunlei's last

words were almost tearful. He was terrified of death. Xu Dongsheng froze for a moment, then angrily said: "Xu - spring - thunder! Are you still one of us Xu family? How can you be a deserter at a time like this?" Xu Chunlei gnawed his teeth, bearing in mind the fear of the elders of the clan, "I can't beat him." "My powers have been restrained by him, so it doesn't matter whether I go or not." "Grandpa, I don't want to die." Xu Dongsheng coldly stared at him, after a long time, he did not disdain the cold hum. "Useless things! We Xu family so many talents, you can do it without a person! Get out of here!" Xu Chunlei such as amnesty, turn around and run back, afraid to run late Xu Dongsheng changed his mind. Xu Dongsheng looked at the fat man's back and exhaled a long puff of white smoke. "The boy is good in everything but cowardly." "That's all. He might as well not go. Keep his genes and maybe pass his powers on to the next generation!" Xu Dongsheng puffed out his chest, "Our Xu family is also a big family, the number of people thriving!" Can't it be done without him?" He immediately called several branches of the Xu family and told them the good news. When the big guys heard that there was such a large library of people nearby, their faces were excited like flowers. "The boy's name is Zhang Yi!" A middle-aged man with a fierce face, "It is he who killed my son, I have long wanted to avenge him!" "This time, we'll count the old and the new together!" A tall middle-aged man nearby said, "If he really has that much material in his hand, we Xu family can use it for decades!" "Thank God for the care of our Xu family, at this time, sent such a big gift!" Someone put their hands together and thanked God. Big guy can't wait to go back, call the clansmen and then go to find Zhang Yi "borrow grain". "When the time comes, let Spring Lei pass first, his ice and snow rush, ordinary door, glass simply can not block." "Someone suggested. "Yes, we have the important battle force of Spring Thunder, but it will have a big effect!" Xu Dongsheng smell speech, but said with a straight face: "This time, spring thunder he will not go!" The words of the next few branches were heard, and suddenly they were discussed with surprise. "What? Spring Thunder not to go? It is That's not good, is it?" "That is, he alone can handle the functions of hundreds of others. If he does not go, nothing else, then Zhang Yi has a gun in his hand, and he will kill many of us!" "Third Uncle, you are the patriarch, you can't indulge him in this matter!" Xu Dongsheng impatiently tapped his

crutches. "All right! Shut up!" "Spring Lei he is the last time to play with Zhang Yi suffered internal injuries. That Zhang Yi is a master with deep internal skills. Although Spring Lei appears to be okay, he is actually hurt very badly." "He will have to recuperate at home for some time." "So we won't take him with us on this mission!" Although Xu Dongsheng some look up to Xu Chunlei cowardice, but after all that is his descendants of this vein, he always partial to some. Although others still have complaints, but the face of the patriarch has to be given. Then think of the whole family of hundreds of men, dealing with a mere Zhang Yi is certainly not a pr

oblem, we will no longer say anything. Xu Dongsheng's eyes became serious. "All right, now go back and gather your people for me!" "Just like the previous fight with the next few villages, boys over the age of 16 have picked up their weapons for me!" "Take all the shotguns and clay powder hidden near the house." After all, he is also an inhuman, and we must not be careless!" "To win this battle with the least

casualties!" The last days have been more than a month, Xu Dongcun has experienced many battles so far, and has formed a certain sense of discipline. Xu Dongsheng arrangement, immediately all branches of the thing people back convenor. A mobilization, th

e village of hundreds of men are holding weapons in the village square gathered. A dense group of people, we do not lack of food on weekdays, so the spirit is very full. It's night. Village chief Xu Dongsheng ordered all the people under the leadership of the branches, divided into six teams began to cross the Lujiang River, toward the Yunque Manor! They put a bit on the dog's mouth, for fear that the barking of the dog alarmed Zhang Yi. Then dogs pulled sledges and sent the villagers over. After crossing the river, the dogs and sledges stayed on the bank. After all, the dogs they raise are particularly precious, and the last time Zhang Yi solved eight at once, the villagers were distressed. The rest, but not one of them want to die! At this time, in the Yunque Manor, the 101 villa located in the center is brightly lit, which is particularly obvious. Zhang Yi sat at the table with Zhou Ke and Yang Siya, enjoying the food on the table. Candlesticks were set on the table, a bottle of '83 Lafite was placed on a red silk tablecloth, and the meals were all French dishes Zhang Yi had ordered from the Michelin restaurant. Regardless of the dangers that may arise outside, life inside this villa can be described as a paradise. Don't be bothered by the stress of life, just enjoy it. Even Yang Siya, who fantasized about leaving one day at the beginning, gradually immersed herself in this beautiful place and could not extricate herself. At that moment, a faint cry from the distance broke the silence.

Chapter 190: The Power of Traps

Zhang Yi's senses were the sharpest. Upon hearing the sound, he immediately looked out the window. The outside was pitch black, making it difficult to see anything in the distance. He stood up silently and said, "I'll go check it out. You two keep eating."

Zhou Ke'er and Yang Siya glanced curiously out the window but saw nothing in the dark. Zhang Yi slowly ascended to the second floor. Keeping the lights off ensured the floor remained dark from the outside. He stood by the window, pulling out his infrared binoculars to scan the villa's surroundings. Under the night sky, numerous red silhouettes were slowly encircling the villa.

A smirk appeared on Zhang Yi's face. "They arrived faster than I expected!" He had already guessed their identity. Only the residents of Xu Family Town could have reached here in just two days. And only such short-sighted people would rush in without proper investigation.

"If you're so eager to die, then come on!" A murderous gleam flashed in Zhang Yi's eyes. Anyone who disturbed his peaceful life deserved to die! Moreover, such a large force was definitely not here for a friendly visit; they were here to rob him of his supplies!

"Ordinary people can't threaten the safety of the shelter. Let's see if any ability users from their village have come. If they have, I'll take this opportunity to eliminate them!" Zhang Yi put away his binoculars and retrieved a tactical visor and a sniper rifle from his dimensional space. Setting the rifle on the window sill, he aimed through the thick nano-grade bulletproof glass.

He waited for the right moment to open the window and take out the ability user. As for the other cannon fodder, he'd let them test the effectiveness of his traps first.

Meanwhile, the first team from Xu Family Town had reached the outskirts of Cloud Manor and were on the edge of Zhang Yi's trap zone. Seeing the brightly lit villa in the distance, they felt like they were dreaming. In the post-apocalyptic world, they had survived by building an ice village with Xu Chunlei's abilities, relying on ancient fishing techniques and stored food.

They couldn't imagine someone still enjoying such a luxurious lifestyle! A villager couldn't resist and took a step forward. Suddenly, he felt a sharp pain in his foot. "Ahhh!" he screamed, falling to the ground. The others quickly checked and found his foot impaled by a wooden plank covered with sharp steel nails that had pierced through his foot.

The villager's face turned pale. In this severe cold, such a severe injury could be fatal. "Quick, carry him back!" The team leader ordered, and they angrily cursed Zhang Yi. "Despicable! Setting traps in the snow!" "Notify everyone to be careful. The ground is filled with nail boards!"

Commanding from the rear, Xu Dongsheng issued orders upon hearing the news: "Proceed with caution. That man is prepared, but such elementary traps won't stop us! Move slowly. Use sticks and branches to clear the traps."

The six teams, approaching from different directions, intended to surround Zhang Yi's shelter. Following Xu Dongsheng's orders, they improvised tools—sticks, shovels, and branches—to clear the snow-covered traps. Zhang Yi observed all of this.

"They think they're smart? The second wave of traps activate," Zhang Yi muttered mockingly. Why wouldn't he have accounted for that if they knew to clear traps this way?

The first group acted as sappers, clearing several nail boards from the snow. Encouraged by their success, they sped up. Suddenly, one person felt resistance from his stick, like it had hit a string. The buried wire triggered a grenade. "Boom!" An explosion ripped through the night, sending nearby people flying.

"Bombs!" shouted the panicked villagers, retreating in fear. However, they barely took a few steps before sharp pains struck their chests and faces. Inspecting themselves, they found their chests covered in blood. Although they avoided the blast, they were struck by shrapnel.

"Ahhhh!" The air filled with screams of agony. The commotion unsettled the other teams. Another unfortunate villager triggered another grenade, causing another explosion that killed or injured over ten more people.

"Bombs! We can't move forward!" In terror, many villagers scrambled to retreat. But in their panic, they stepped on the nail boards again, not fully cleared before. Losing direction in the dark, they stepped into the traps, nails piercing their feet and causing them to fall, some even landing face-first onto the nails.

"Ahhh!" screamed one unfortunate man, blind and desperate, trying to pull the nails from his face. In his struggle, he ripped off his skin, leaving a bloody eye hanging. The villagers, never having seen such carnage, were utterly terrified.

While they had fought with neighboring villages, those conflicts were over resources and land, not intended to kill. Zhang Yi's traps were designed to kill from the start. The scene turned chaotic, with people inadvertently injuring each other in their panic, resulting in more deaths and injuries. In the first moments alone, the Xu Family Town lost over ten people, with twenty more injured, and they had barely reached the outskirts of Villa 101.