

Ice Age 211

Chapter 211 Bullying

Zhang Mengning said these cruel words to Yang Xinxin with a smile on his face.

Yang Xinxin suddenly stayed in place, her eyes open blankly, and two lines of tears slipped directly along her cheeks.

When they saw this scene, no one stood up and accused Zhang Mengning, but laughed.

Some people even clapped their hands and thought Zhang Mengning had done a good job.

"Zhang Mengning, you have enough! Everyone is a classmate, how can you say such cruel words!"

A girl with short hair and handsome appearance came over and quickly blocked Yang Xinxin's front.

She is Yang Xinxin's best friend Lu Kevan. If she hadn't been pushing Yang Xinxin's wheelchair, Yang Xinxin would have died.

Zhang Mengning covered his stomach and suddenly burst out laughing wildly.

"Ha ha ha! Lu can burn, what are you, and you deserve to talk to me like this!"

Her eyes flashed a touch of disdain cold awn, pointing to landing combustible and saying: "You are such a special care for students, and dare to talk back to this lady, forget your identity?"

Among aristocratic schools, the hierarchy is stricter.

Zhang Mengning is the daughter of a rich family, while Lu Kengli, though well-off, can be placed at the bottom of Azure College.

Lu Combustible blushed and clenched his fist and said, "What if your family has money? Now this is the time, can your family have money to save you?"

Zhang Mengning said angrily: "Shut up! No matter when, the gap between you and us can't be erased!"

"Just leave this hellhole and see the light of day again. You and I are still not from the same world!"

She looked at Yang Xinxin viciously, laughing and pointing at her.

"Yang Xinxin, it is because you have dragged down everyone that we have died so many classmates now!"

"You should die quickly and stop living!"

Yang Xinxin's eyes were full of tears, and she was cursed so viciously by Zhang Mengning. She didn't have a rebuttal, just lowered her head and let the tears fall on the white back of her hand.

Yang Xinxin couldn't stand his friend being abused so much.

She retorted: "Zhang Mengning, Xinxin, she is also a human being, and she also has the right to live! Why do you say that about her?"

"Shin Shin is not to blame for the deaths of others!"

At this moment, another girl with a long ponytail and a princess-like oval face stood up.

She said slowly: "However, a disability that can only sit in a wheelchair will really drag us all down!"

The girl's name is Zheng Yuncong, and she is the daughter of an official in Jiangnan Province.

She came gently, her eyes fixed on Yang Xinxin, and a natural arrogance appeared on her face.

"So, Zhang Mengning said nothing wrong. You are indeed a burden!"

"In the past, everyone didn't leave you for the sake of classmates, but you shouldn't be so uninteresting?"

"Do you kidnap us morally with your disability?"

"It's too much to do this, really."

With these two girls taking the lead, other people who have long been dissatisfied with Yang Xinxin, or those who simply want to see others die, began to blame Yang Xinxin.

Yang Xinxin is very beautiful, and the body has poliomyelitis. In addition, the top hacker's personal design perfectly conforms to the setting of beauty, strength and misery.

Therefore, in the past, her popularity in Azure College has been very high, and many boys are eager to be her knight to protect her.

This naturally makes many girls jealous of her.

At this point, the long-suppressed evil thoughts were released with everyone.

"Yang Xinxin, will you not drag us down?"

"It's really... If it weren't for Liang Yue's soft heart, I would have wanted to leave you behind."

"Please, can you find a place to die by yourself!"

Yang Xinxin lowered his head and didn't refute a word, but the white back of his hand was too hard, and veins stood out.

Lu can burn a person in front of her, trying to argue for her.

"What have you done for Xinxin? Every time I take care of her, don't put your desperate situation on others!"

Zhang Mengning pointed out that landing is combustible and said sarcastically: "Lu is combustible, you are so poor. The family is a prominent darling daughter, and you are just a student who takes special care of the school."

"If it weren't for her health, would she be friends with you? I think she just wants to use you and gain superiority from you!"

"Don't be silly, if she is well, she won't talk to you!"

Lu can burn angrily said: "It won't! Xinxin, she is not such a person."

Yang Xinxin lowered his head and said nothing.

However, a group of girls twittered around her, which made her very uncomfortable.

"It's so noisy."

She whispered.

However, this sentence has long been buried in the quarrel of all people.

Among the students, a girl with high-grade wine red hair and delicate appearance suddenly came over.

"Don't make any more noise! At this time, we should all unite and help each other!"

As soon as the red-haired girl opened her mouth, the tone of other girls suddenly weakened.

Because her family belongs to the top class, she is also the Communist Youth League secretary in the class, named Shen Miaoke.

Shen Miaoke looked at Yang Xinxin gently and bowed his head and said, "Xinxin, don't worry! Although you are very troublesome now, we will not give up!"

"I'm sure you won't blame us all, will you? Let's continue to be good friends in the future!"

As she spoke, she smiled and extended her right hand to Yang Xinxin.

Shen Miaoke looks so gentle.

She even stood up and spoke for Yang Xinxin, who was besieged by everyone.

Just her tone, always let a person feel some subtle uncomfortable.

Yang Xinxin did not reach out.

Shen Miaoke waited for a moment, and his expression was awkward.

Her head tilted and she wanted to look Yang Xinxin in the eye through her bangs.

"Don't you even want to shake hands with me? I have always cared about you most!"

The students around are also looking like watching a good show.

Others said, "Miaoke, you are so kind! You are still so kind to useless people like her."

"Hey, Yang Xinxin, what do you mean? Miaoke shakes hands with you, don't give your face shameless!"

"Cut, you won't be disabled in your legs. Is there something wrong with your brain?"

The girls laughed at Yang Xinxin here, while the boys watched the excitement not far away, and had no intention of coming to help.

In today's depressing environment, watching others be bullied can also make them get morbid pleasure.

Yang Xinxin's hand was held up. Just as she raised her hand forward, an abnormal sound suddenly came from behind them.

"Dang!"

They subconsciously turned back, and then heard a very piercing scream.

The three-meter-high metal window outside the gymnasium was pushed down, and a big paw with a length of five or six meters and a dark glow of metal light extended from the inside.

The claw buckled Zheng Yuncong's head and carried it high into the sky very easily.

A strange big face appeared outside the gymnasium, with a gloomy smile on the corners of the mouth.

"Meow--"

Chapter 212: Dinner Time

Zheng Yuncong's body was lifted like a rag doll. Her entire body went rigid as blood began to seep from her head. Before she could scream for help, she was swiftly yanked out the window. The enormous black monster brought her to its face, its scarlet tongue licking her, the barbs on its tongue tearing her flesh until her face was unrecognizable.

"Ahhh!!!"

The gym erupted in terrified screams. Everyone scrambled to the back of the gym, trying to escape. No one thought of Yang Xinxin, except for Lu Keran, who pushed her wheelchair as fast as she could.

A group of students reached the back door only to find it sealed shut. No matter how hard they tried, they couldn't open it.

"Damn, it's frozen shut!"

"Open it, or we're all dead!"

The students were pale with fear, some wetting themselves in panic. Meanwhile, the black monster had already entered the gym. Standing over ten meters tall, it was entirely black, its body covered in blood and grime. Its hair was as sharp as steel needles, completely blocking the gym's main entrance.

The monster held Zheng Yuncong, licking her for a moment before casually biting off her head.

"Splash—"

Blood gushed out like a fountain.

"Ahhh!!!"

The girls screamed, collapsing to the floor in terror. The boys frantically tried to open the back door, but it was frozen solid and blocked by tons of ice and snow, impossible to move.

The monster tossed Zheng Yuncong's body aside and walked into the gym, blocking the door with its massive frame. It tilted its head, seemingly assessing the frightened students. They saw a mocking intelligence in its eyes, chilling them to the bone. This was no mindless beast but a sentient monster.

The students huddled in a corner, paralyzed by fear, unable to muster any will to fight. Suddenly, someone shoved Yang Xinxin, wheelchair and all, towards the monster. She fell forward, hitting the floor hard. The monster's attention was immediately drawn to her, and it took a step closer.

"Xinxin!" Lu Keran screamed, her legs paralyzed with fear, unable to move. The monster loomed over Yang Xinxin, who lay helpless on the floor. Just then, the boys who had pushed her made a run for the door.

The monster's head turned slightly, its amber eyes locking onto them. Its mouth curled into a mocking smile.

"Smack!"

The monster's huge claw slapped down, instantly crushing two boys to the ground.

"Spurt!"

The slight pressure was enough to rupture their internal organs, causing them to vomit blood. Desperately, they tried to crawl away, unwilling to die. They were sons of wealthy families, destined for great futures. How could they die here?

Ignoring the motionless Yang Xinxin, the monster turned its attention to the fleeing boys. Its claws, sharp as knives, slashed at them, tearing their bodies open and splattering blood everywhere.

With the monster's back turned, Lu Keran mustered her courage and rushed to help Yang Xinxin up. Wu Chengyu's eyes lit up as he whispered to his friends, "I get it. The monster attacks moving targets. Yang Xinxin pretended to be dead and survived."

His friends nodded, realizing why Li Yong and Zhou Keqiang had died when they tried to run.

"So what do we do? Play dead?"

Wu Chengyu's eyes turned cold. "Playing dead might not work. This monster could be toying with us. Here's what we'll do."

After a quick discussion, Wu Chengyu incited the others, "Quick, while the monster is distracted, let's make a run for it!"

"If we stay here, we're dead. Someone needs to go get Teacher Liang!"

Some were too scared to move, but others, desperate to avoid death, decided to take the risk.

"Everyone rush it! It can't kill us all. Staying here is certain death!"

Fueled by extreme fear, a few boys, their eyes red with rage, decided to act. The monster, still toying with the struggling boys, had its back turned. Li Yong and Zhou Keqiang, covered in blood, still fought to live, calling out for help.

"Help us! Don't leave us behind!"

"Please, Wu Chengyu, Xiao Ran, we're best friends!"

Rather than killing them outright, the monster seemed to enjoy their struggle, batting them around like toys. Meanwhile, the other boys crept behind the monster, trying to escape.

Ignoring their classmates' pleas, they moved stealthily, but Li Yong and Zhou Keqiang's cries drew the monster's attention.

"Look, they're running!"

The monster's eyes narrowed, its head rotating 180 degrees to spot the fleeing boys. They froze, terror gripping them. In a desperate bid for life, they sprinted for the door.

"Smack!"

"Smack!"

"Smack!"

The monster's claws struck quickly, crushing the boys' chests and leaving them lifeless on the ground.

Chapter 213: The Tang Sword and the Female Warrior

The three students stopped by the monster glared furiously at Li Yong and Zhou Keqi. "Bastards!!!"

Knowing they wouldn't survive, Li Yong and Zhou Keqi laughed despite the blood streaming from their mouths. "No one lives! If we die, you all die with us!"

The monster now had seven new playthings, and its excitement grew. It raised its massive black tail, claws scraping the ground. Taking advantage of the distraction, Wu Chengyu and two others darted out of the gym, faces alight with relief.

Wu Chengyu grinned triumphantly. "Sorry, but better you die than us!" His companions praised him. "Chengyu, you're so smart! You used them to distract the monster so we could escape."

As they fled, Wu Chengyu explained, "I figured it was a mutated cat. Cats love to play with their prey before eating. Unless they're starving, they're not interested in dead mice."

The monster noticed a few had escaped inside the gym but wasn't concerned. The rest of the students were still there. The gym was like its personal pantry, full of food. Other students huddled in corners, envious of those who escaped. Some attempted to imitate them, sneaking away.

But the monster was now alert and wouldn't let them succeed. "Smack! Smack!" Louder than before, the monster ended its play, crushing the students beneath its claws. The remaining students screamed in horror, nearly breaking down.

At that moment, a shout echoed, "Damn monster, don't hurt my students!"

Despair turned to hope as the students saw their teacher return. "Teacher Liang is back!"

A tall woman with a high ponytail stood at the door, wielding a traditional Tang sword. She charged at the monster, the blade glinting with a faint blue light. The monster, recognizing the danger, shrieked and dodged.

Seeing the bodies on the ground, Teacher Liang Yue's eyes filled with sorrow, but she saw the surviving students and decided not to engage the monster inside. She slowly moved deeper into the gym, clearing a path to the door. Understanding her intent, the monster smirked and grabbed a student's body before slinking out.

Holding her sword tightly, Liang Yue cautiously followed. Outside, she found only the monster's burrowed snow tunnels. She sighed in relief but also felt an overwhelming exhaustion. How long could she protect her students in this deadly game of cat and mouse?

For over a month, most of her students had died, not from the cold, but at the hands of this monster. If not for her exceptional combat skills and awakened superhuman abilities, she too would have become its meal. But constantly defending against the monster while protecting her students was wearing her down.

Liang Yue sheathed her Tang sword. Class representative Shen Miaoke approached timidly, "Teacher Liang!"

Liang Yue nodded and gestured to the sack at her feet. "Distribute the food to everyone." She found a corner, sat down with her sword, and closed her eyes to rest. She was utterly exhausted.

Since the apocalypse began, the school had become a graveyard. The monster had killed most people, not the cold. Only Liang Yue's strength and abilities had kept her alive. But protecting so many students and constantly defending against the monster was draining her completely.

Shen Miaoke and a few girls handed out the food to the survivors. Soon, Wu Chengyu and his companions returned, nonchalantly grabbing some food. They acted as if nothing had happened, ignoring their earlier betrayal.

Just then, Zhang Mengning, who had previously scolded Yang Xinxin, snapped. The death of her best friend, Zheng Yuncong, had pushed her over the edge. She rushed at Yang Xinxin, screaming, "Why are you still alive when everyone else is dead? You should be the one dead, you useless cripple!"

"Why won't you just die?"

Yang Xinxin remained silent. What could she say? She understood too well that blame needed no justification. Lu Keran defended her friend, "Zhang Mengning, be reasonable! How is this Xinxin's fault?"

Zhang Mengning, tears streaming, stomped and cursed, "I hate her, so what?"

Shen Miaokey tried to calm her, "Zhang Mengning, please stop." She handed some food to Yang Xinxin. "Xinxin, eat something."

Zhang Mengning slapped the food to the ground. "Stop wasting food on her! The school's supplies are limited. She'll die eventually. Better save it for those who can use it!"

Liang Yue, eyes closed, opened them briefly at the commotion. Seeing the students fighting again, she closed her eyes. She was too tired. These conflicts happened daily. Someone would snap, argue, or even fight. She had no energy left for these issues, needing all her strength to combat the monster.

Zhang Mengning's shouting filled the gym. In a corner, a girl sat on a gym mat, clutching her head, eyes filled with despair. "It's useless. All this arguing is pointless. We're all going to die, eaten by that monster!"

"Don't you see? We're all just food for it, kept alive because it likes fresh meat!"

Chapter 214: The Mutated Creature

The girl's outburst left everyone with chills. It was true; the monster always picked a few people to kill each time it appeared, never slaughtering too many at once. It was as if it were raising chickens and ducks, selecting a few to eat when it was hungry.

“We have no hope left!” the girl screamed in despair. “There will be no rescue! This world is already doomed!”

Class president Wu Chengyu, however, bit his lip and retorted, “There will be hope! There has to be!”

“We are the elite of this society, destined for greatness. We won’t die here!” He gazed at the sky, sealed off by thick layers of ice and snow. “Once we get out of here and contact the outside world, my father will come and rescue me!”

But escaping to the surface was a monumental challenge. Despite her formidable abilities and martial arts background, Liang Yue couldn’t fend off the mutated monster while protecting a large group of students.

After an hour-long drive, Zhang Yi, Fatty Xu, and Uncle You arrived at the former site of Tianqing Academy. The landscape was a vast, white expanse, but a small hill near the academy provided a reference point to confirm their location.

The three got out of the car, Zhang Yi holding his handgun and instructing the others, “Stay alert. There could be danger.”

Fatty Xu gulped and instinctively stepped back. Uncle You, however, stood resolutely at the front, his military training and sense of duty compelling him to protect the others.

“Everything is buried under the snow. How do we know where to find the person you’re here to rescue?” Uncle You asked, a bit perplexed.

Zhang Yi pulled out his phone to contact Yang Xinxin, but the call wouldn’t go through. “The signal is poor here.”

“Let’s search around. This school is huge, and some tall buildings must be sticking out,” Zhang Yi suggested. “The map shows the school’s layout. Once we find a building, we can figure out where Yang Xinxin might be.”

Fatty Xu looked disheartened. “This elite school is massive. I heard it even has a golf course.”

Zhang Yi nodded. "The campus covers 3,000 acres. We'll drive around and look. There's no rush."

Without a car, searching would take forever. Uncle You suggested, "Let's split up to search faster."

Zhang Yi shook his head. "No, we stick together for safety. Slow and steady."

Uncle You agreed, and they resumed their search. Soon, they spotted the top of a building.

"There's a tower up ahead! Let's check it out," Zhang Yi said.

Zhang Yi and Fatty Xu approached the structure. Using the map, Zhang Yi identified it as the astronomy center. "The astronomy center is in the southeast. The dorms and cafeteria are in the north, quite far apart."

Fatty Xu suggested, "Could they hide in classrooms or the gym? They'd need a large space to move around and enough oxygen."

Zhang Yi considered this. "Maybe. The dorms and cafeteria are the best bets because of the food and shelter. But we should also check places like the gym and classrooms."

As Zhang Yi analyzed the possible locations, Fatty Xu and Uncle You entered the astronomy center's tower. Fatty Xu used his ability to manipulate the ice and snow, clearing a path to a window.

"We can get in here!" Fatty Xu exclaimed.

Zhang Yi dismissed the idea. "We're not here to collect telescopes."

Fatty Xu's face fell, but Zhang Yi softened his tone. "Those telescopes might be useful later for scouting. We might as well grab them while we're here."

Fatty Xu's confidence surged, and he and Uncle You prepared to enter the building. Suddenly, Zhang Yi felt a chilling presence, the sensation of being watched by a predator.

He turned, guns ready, and his eyes widened. A massive black creature lay silently in the snow, its eyes fixed on him. The beast's head was as large as a Tyrannosaurus rex's, its black fur bristling like steel needles, and its amber eyes gleamed with an unsettling intelligence.

"A mutated creature!" Zhang Yi thought, recognizing it from Yang Xinxin's descriptions.

The creature's gaze remained locked on Zhang Yi, but it didn't attack. Zhang Yi noted the absence of the usual bloodthirsty intent. The beast seemed more curious than hostile.

"What's going on?" Zhang Yi wondered, puzzled by the creature's behavior.

Chapter 215: The Snow Tunnel

The sudden appearance of the gigantic monster startled Zhang Yi. However, he quickly composed himself. After facing numerous life-and-death situations, his nerves were steel-like. What surprised him was that the monster showed no hostility towards him. As Zhang Yi pondered how to deal with it, Fatty Xu and Uncle You climbed out of the snow and approached, looking for some ropes to descend further.

Their emergence caught the monster's attention. Fatty Xu, upon seeing the enormous creature, screamed in terror. Instinctively, he thrust his right hand forward, unleashing his power. Snow and ice erupted from the ground, surging towards the monster.

"Stop!" Zhang Yi shouted, but it was too late. In the snowy terrain, Fatty Xu's power was unrivaled. The snowstorm, mixed with heavy ice, pummeled the black monster. It let out a piercing scream and moved like lightning across the snow.

"So fast!" Zhang Yi's eyes widened. The massive creature moved swiftly, dodging the ice attack effortlessly and charging at Fatty Xu. Realizing the threat, Zhang Yi immediately enveloped himself with his spatial ability.

"Double speed!"

With his spatial ability enhancing his speed, Zhang Yi could double his movements, necessary to counter the beast's attack. As the monster closed in on Fatty Xu, Zhang Yi raised his guns and fired rapidly.

"Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang!"

The casing fell to the ground as Zhang Yi unleashed a flurry of bullets. The monster was fast, but Zhang Yi's enhanced speed allowed him to aim accurately. Armor-piercing rounds struck the beast, sparks flying as some of its hard fur was clipped. It roared in anger but appeared not seriously injured.

Zhang Yi gasped. Those were armor-piercing bullets, yet they only managed to trim its fur. During the brief distraction, Uncle You stepped in front of Fatty Xu. His muscles bulged, and his body grew to over two meters tall, his skin turning stone-like. He punched the monster squarely in the face.

"Boom!"

The impact created a large depression in the snow as the beast's face twisted nearly 90 degrees, forcing it back several steps. It let out an infuriated roar.

"It's a feline!" Zhang Yi thought, noting the monster's roar. Whether it was a mutated cat or something from the zoo, it was extremely dangerous. Felines were apex predators of their size class, barring mustelids.

Unhesitatingly, Zhang Yi holstered his handguns and switched to a sniper rifle. Against this beast, a handgun wasn't sufficient. The power of a sniper rifle was necessary.

The monster saw three opponents: the robust Uncle You and Fatty Xu together and Zhang Yi a dozen meters away. It naturally chose to charge at Zhang Yi first. Zhang Yi, acting quickly, fired the sniper rifle.

"Bang!"

His deafening shot was even more powerful. The monster sensed danger and tried to dodge, but it couldn't outpace the sniper bullet, enhanced by his ability.

"Crack!"

The bullet struck its cheek, shattering rows of its steel-like whiskers and causing blood to spurt. Enraged, the monster curled into a ball, its body covered in spikes, and rolled towards Zhang Yi.

"Damn it!" Zhang Yi didn't expect this maneuver. The rolling spiked ball plowed through the snow, creating deep fissures. Zhang Yi's speed made dodging impossible, but he didn't need to.

"Dimensional Gate, open!"

He opened a gate to a parallel dimension in front of him. While he enjoyed offense, defense was his strong suit. Once in the parallel dimension, any creature would be trapped in a frozen world, slowly perishing.

Sensing the danger, the monster abruptly changed direction mid-air and rolled away, disappearing hundreds of meters away.

"Damn, so close!" Zhang Yi cursed, frustrated at missing the chance to trap the beast. He wanted to study this mutant and understand the differences between mutated creatures and superhumans.

Fatty Xu and Uncle You quickly joined Zhang Yi, all eyes on the retreating monster. Zhang Yi aimed his sniper rifle but didn't fire. The monster, realizing their threat, retreated cautiously before turning and vanishing into the snow.

"Where did it go?" Uncle You was astonished. Such a massive creature disappearing so suddenly was baffling.

Fatty Xu speculated, "Could it have spatial abilities, too?"

Zhang Yi shook his head. "Doesn't seem like it. If it did, it would have used them earlier."

His spatial senses told him the monster had simply run off. They approached where the monster vanished and found a large tunnel leading into the snow.

"A tunnel!" Uncle You exclaimed.

"With this thing nearby, finding the people we're looking for will be tricky," Fatty Xu said seriously. "If that monster is around, there shouldn't be any survivors in the school."

"Brother Zhang, are you sure your information is accurate?"

Chapter 216: A Desperate Struggle

Fatty Xu's doubts were not unfounded. It was hard to believe that ordinary people, let alone someone with his abilities, could survive an encounter with such a monstrous creature without thorough preparation. Considering its size, the amount of food it needed was enormous, likely dozens of times that of a normal human. Fatty Xu couldn't fathom how it had survived all this time without preying on the people at the school.

However, Zhang Yi had a different perspective. "You didn't notice one crucial thing," he said. "That creature didn't intend to harm us initially."

Zhang Yi looked at Fatty Xu. "If you hadn't suddenly attacked it and provoked it, we might not have ended up in this situation."

Fatty Xu was bewildered. "Did I really provoke it? I was just terrified!"

Zhang Yi recalled the monster's eyes, sensing an intelligence there, not just the mindless hunger of a beast. "It's possible the mutation enhanced its intelligence significantly, maybe even comparable to humans."

"And I did hear Yang Xinxin's voice during that phone call. The monster couldn't have made that call," Zhang Yi continued.

He approached the large hole the monster had created, peering into its depths. The tunnel was enormous, big enough for a vehicle to pass through, and provided a crucial air supply that could explain why people hadn't suffocated underground.

After contemplating for a while, Zhang Yi made a decision. "Let's go down and take a look."

"What? Go down there?" Fatty Xu exclaimed, frightened. "What if we encounter that monster again? This is its territory!"

Zhang Yi looked at Fatty Xu hard. "Have you forgotten your own abilities? You're an ice and snow manipulator and scared to fight in the snow?"

Fatty Xu realized his oversight. In the snowy environment, his powers were at their peak. If the monster attacked, he could bury it under tons of snow.

Feeling embarrassed, Fatty Xu scratched his head. "I guess I was just too scared earlier."

Zhang Yi didn't criticize him further. Fatty Xu had the least combat experience and was the most timid among the three. Over time, with more battles, his strength would undoubtedly grow. Superpowers alone didn't determine combat effectiveness; intellect, courage, and even luck played crucial roles.

With Fatty Xu's powers as their foundation, Zhang Yi's absolute defense, and Uncle You as a strong shield, they were not afraid of facing the monster underground.

Zhang Yi stored their snowmobiles in his spatial space, and the three descended into the monster's tunnel. Upon landing, they discovered an intricate network of tunnels beneath the snow, all carved out by the monster.

The tunnels were dark, so Zhang Yi lit a mining lamp, illuminating a hundred meters ahead. Even in the darkness, the monster couldn't ambush them. Zhang Yi also produced two boxes of crayons, explaining, "We'll use these to mark our path so we don't get lost."

"But how will we find our way in this labyrinth?" Fatty Xu asked.

Uncle You sniffed the air cautiously. "There's a strong smell of blood."

Fatty Xu quickly added, "It must be from the monster. Who knows how many it has eaten? We should follow the tunnels with the least blood scent."

Zhang Yi rolled his eyes. "With all three of us here, especially in the snow, you should be more confident. If we encounter the monster, it should be the one running away."

He retrieved a golden handgun and methodically loaded bullets. Uncle You recognized the weapon immediately. "Golden Desert Eagle!"

"Yes," Zhang Yi replied. The Desert Eagle, one of the most powerful handguns in the world, had ten times the firepower of the police handgun he had previously used. It surpassed even the renowned AK-47 in terms of kinetic energy. Its drawbacks were its weight and strong recoil, making it difficult for an average person to handle.

Armed with armor-piercing rounds, Zhang Yi was confident that the Desert Eagle could significantly damage the monster if they faced it again. After loading the weapon, he chambered a round and said, "Uncle You, your scouting skills are the best. Lead the way following the monster's path. It will head towards any living people for food, and we'll find them by following it."

Fatty Xu was still nervous, but Zhang Yi's confident words reassured him. "Yes, Boss!"

Following Uncle You's lead, they traced the scent of blood. Zhang Yi marked their path with crayons, embedding the tips into the snow walls to avoid detection and destruction by the monster.

Teacher Liang Yue and the dozen or so surviving students had been at the Tianqing Academy gymnasium for three days. Their last food search was also three days ago, leaving everyone hungry. Liang Yue faced a difficult dilemma. The monster circled nearby, ready to strike if they showed any weakness. She couldn't leave the students to search for food alone, but sending others would be a death sentence.

Due to the thin air, they risked suffocation in the confined space under the snow. Liang Yue had the strength to fight the monster but couldn't simultaneously protect the students and search for supplies.

They had tried before, and the monster had ignored her, attacking the students instead, resulting in heavy casualties.

Liang Yue guarded the gym entrance for three days with her Tang sword. The monster hadn't attacked again, but her instincts told her it was still nearby. "We can't hold out any longer," she thought, fatigue evident in her eyes. She had eaten very little, and the hunger made her anxious and uneasy.

Protecting all her students was her duty as a teacher and a hired bodyguard, but the reality was harsh. She had to make difficult choices.

Chapter 217: Meditation

Liang Yue gripped her Tang sword tightly. Despite the gnawing hunger, it could also ignite a fierce will to survive—an instinctual drive. The students' faces were filled with numbness and madness in the gymnasium. Over the past month, they had constantly faced death, witnessing their friends die one by one. This relentless strain had fractured their sanity.

Just last night, a girl hanged herself from the basketball hoop while everyone was distracted. The next morning, when the others discovered her body, no one cried; they remained eerily calm.

Liang Yue knew things couldn't go on like this. As the only teacher in the group, she felt responsible for giving these kids a fighting chance for the future. As she pondered their situation, class president Wu Chengyu and youth league secretary Shen Miaoke approached her.

"Ms. Liang," Wu Chengyu began.

Liang Yue looked up at them.

"Shouldn't we go out to find some food?" Wu Chengyu suggested. "If this continues, we'll starve to death."

Shen Miaoke, with her hands clasped in front of her, looked sorrowful. "You're our only hope. What will happen to us if you stay here resting instead of looking for food?"

Liang Yue was taken aback. She realized they thought her reluctance to search for food was due to fear of the monster, that she was afraid to die.

Taking a deep breath, Liang Yue reminded herself not to get angry with her students. "What if the monster attacks while I'm gone?" she asked.

Shen Miaokey frowned. "That's why you need to be quick! Grab the food and come right back!"

Wu Chengyu added, "Don't worry, Ms. Liang. We'll do our best to protect everyone."

He looked at Liang Yue with a touch of disdain. At a time like this, still thinking about protecting everyone—are you stubborn or just foolish? But he also acknowledged her utility, thinking, At least you're useful enough to keep us alive. Just listen to smart people like me, and everything will be fine. If the monster comes, we'll sacrifice a few to buy time until you return.

Shen Miaokey clasped her hands together, pleading, "Ms. Liang, please! Our lives depend on you!"

Liang Yue gazed deeply at the two students. Without a word, she used her Tang sword to help herself stand up. "Alright, I'll go out now. Take care of yourselves," she said.

Wu Chengyu and Shen Miaokey readily agreed. Wu Chengyu had learned the monster's habits well over the past month. It enjoyed toying with its prey and stored food, so it only killed a few at a time.

Liang Yue walked out of the gym, Tang sword in hand, stepping into the icy corridor. Several students quickly closed the door behind her. Exhaling a puff of white breath, she looked towards the end of the ice corridor before heading towards the cafeteria.

She hadn't gone far when she quickly hid in a corner of the ice tunnel, pressing her back against the wall and closing her eyes. She entered a state of meditation.

Meditation wasn't a mystical ability. Even ordinary people could learn it with proper guidance and achieve a state of inner peace. For martial artists, it was a required practice to clear their minds and focus inwardly. Legends spoke of martial masters who, through meditation, entered a profound inner

realm. Liang Yue hadn't reached such heights, but as a top martial artist, she could use meditation to calm and conceal her presence.

I can't wait any longer. Rather than being picked off individually, taking a decisive stand is better. Liang Yue resolved, determined to either kill the monster or die trying. She was prepared to make the ultimate sacrifice, driven by her duty to protect her students.

Meanwhile, she overlooked that felines, as natural hunters, were experts at concealing their presence. Back in the gym, the students instinctively huddled in the corners after Liang Yue left. Yang Xinxin sat in her wheelchair, looking fragile like a crystal rose.

Lu Keran knelt beside her, gently touching her arm and leg. "Does it still hurt?" she asked.

Yang Xinxin had been used as bait a few days earlier and was pushed out to lure the monster. Luckily, the creature was more interested in moving targets, and she had survived, though bruised and injured.

Forcing a pale smile, Yang Xinxin replied, "I'm okay. It's so cold I can't feel the pain anymore."

Lu Keran relaxed a bit, seeing her friend smile. "Don't give up hope. We have to survive, right?"

Yang Xinxin nodded firmly. "Yes, we'll survive. We have to."

Nearby, Zhang Mengning sneered, her face twisted in madness. "You think you're so lucky, don't you? You believe luck will always be on your side?"

"Even if you survive, what good will it do? You're just a cripple, a burden to everyone."

"If I were you, I'd have killed myself already. You're living a painful life and dragging others down with you."

Other students also looked at Yang Xinxin with twisted smiles. They felt it was unfair that she, despite being disabled, had the same right to live as they did. "What's the point of clinging to life?"

"When the monster comes next time, you won't be so lucky."

Yang Xinxin remained silent. She was never good at arguing, preferring to avoid confrontation unless online. Lu Keran, unable to bear it any longer, was about to speak up when she noticed a huge amber eye peering through a nearby window.

Chapter 218: Mind Your Own Business

"Run!" Lu Keran screamed in terror.

The black monster had silently appeared outside the gymnasium, unnoticed until it was seen. They couldn't fathom how such a massive creature could move so stealthily.

Run? But where to?

Realizing the danger, the students screamed and tried to flee in all directions. The monster's claw easily shattered the reinforced window, reaching inside. The five- to six-meter-long arm, with sharp claws like gleaming steel blades and hair like sharp spikes, raked through the gym.

It seemed almost playful, like a giant cat playing with mice, though the sight would appear absurdly comical from an outsider's perspective.

But this enormous cat was not cute as it clawed at a group of helpless humans. The razor-sharp claws swiftly slashed through the air, leaving several bodies with long gashes, their innards spilling out immediately.

The hellish screams were even more terrifying, especially coming from their classmates. Wu Chengyu and his group, though terrified, were prepared. They hid in the back, pushing unlucky students forward as shields. One wasn't enough; they pushed forward another and another, selecting the strongest students they had roped into their plan. The rest, even if they realized the betrayal, could do nothing but curse in futility.

At that moment, Lu Keran, pushing Yang Xinxin, was the fastest to react. Ironically, having a wheelchair gave them a survival advantage.

Meanwhile, while hiding and waiting, Liang Yue seized the opportunity to strike. A faint blue mist emanated from her body as she gripped her sword sheath with her left hand and the hilt with her right. With a fierce shout, she dashed towards the black monster like lightning.

"Ha!!"

The white blade gleamed as it sliced through the air, aiming for the monster's neck. Liang Yue had poured all her strength into this attack, determined to fight to the death. If she won, it would be a hard-fought victory that would ensure their survival. If she lost, she would be the first to die.

The monster, engrossed in toying with the students, was unprepared for the sudden assault. As Liang Yue approached, its black fur bristled like a porcupine's quills, each hair as hard as steel.

"Meow—"

The piercing roar threatened to burst eardrums. Cats are known for quick reflexes, but Liang Yue was equally fast. Her blade flashed, severing large clumps of fur that fell to the ground with metallic clinks.

"Shhhrkk!"

A gash over a meter long opened on the monster's neck, spraying blood. Enraged, the creature retreated, roaring furiously. Liang Yue, abandoning defense, pressed her attack with a do-or-die resolve.

Like a ghost, the monster retreated ten meters, but Liang Yue stayed close, her blade slashing through the air. Her eyes conveyed a deadly determination, which the monster sensed.

"Meow—"

Its screams grew more desperate as it began to defend itself. Liang Yue's Tang sword was incredibly powerful. She had mastered numerous martial arts, including national techniques, kenjutsu, Krav Maga, and Muay Thai, seeking the strongest combat skills. Her strikes were deadly, focused solely on attack.

As they fought fiercely, snow walls crumbled, covered in terrifying gashes from her blade and the monster's claws. The students inside the gym, hearing the battle outside, were too scared to move.

They watched as cracks appeared on the walls, some from the sword, others from the monster's claws. Their only hope was to pray silently for Liang Yue's victory, their last chance for survival.

During this intense battle, Zhang Yi, Uncle You, and Fatty Xu followed the noise and found an exit. Their sudden appearance caught both Liang Yue and the monster's attention.

Liang Yue, seeing the newcomers, thought, I've never seen them before; they must be outsiders!

Hope sparkled in her eyes. Rescuers from the outside? Surely, they were here to save them, considering the school's prestigious students had powerful and wealthy parents.

"Help me defeat this monster!" she shouted to Zhang Yi and his team.

Fatty Xu raised his hand to attack but was stopped by Zhang Yi. "Brother Zhang?"

Fatty Xu was confused. He thought it was their duty to help fellow humans against the monster. Why was Zhang Yi stopping him?

"Wait!" Zhang Yi commanded, watching Liang Yue intently. Her sword skills were sharp and deadly, far beyond ordinary. She wasn't just a martial artist; her strength and speed suggested she was a superhuman with exceptional combat abilities.

Zhang Yi couldn't tell if she was a friend or foe. His mission was to find Yang Xinxin, not to save unrelated people. The black monster was formidable, and engaging it could risk their safety. There was no need to intervene.

"No need to get involved. She seems to be handling it. Let's go rescue the others," Zhang Yi said, heading towards the gym.

Fatty Xu paused, scratching his head. Zhang Yi's reasoning made sense. He initially wanted to help because she was young and beautiful, but he realized it was unnecessary. Helping a stranger might lead to awkwardness if misinterpreted, he thought, remembering past embarrassments.

"Better not be the fool here," he decided, following Zhang Yi.

Uncle You, recognizing Liang Yue's formidable skills, felt cautious. He knew he'd stand no chance against her despite his military training. Deciding it was wiser to follow Zhang Yi and avoid unnecessary danger, he joined them in searching for survivors.

Liang Yue was shocked and frustrated as she saw the three ignore her plea and head into the gym. Unable to spare attention, she focused on the monster, battling fiercely. She could only watch helplessly as Zhang Yi's group entered the gym.

"What are you doing?" she shouted but had no choice but to continue fighting. Her students' safety was in her hands, and she couldn't afford distractions.

Chapter 219: The Paralyzed Girl

"Bang!"

The gymnasium doors were forcefully pushed open, the equipment barring them no match for Uncle You's titan-like strength. Zhang Yi stepped inside, his gaze sweeping over the frightened students.

The students nearly screamed, but seeing that three humans had entered, they felt a bit more at ease. Zhang Yi quickly spotted the girl in the wheelchair—Yang Xinxin. He had seen her photo before and recognized her immediately.

"Good, you're still alive," Zhang Yi sighed in relief. If she had died before he arrived, all his efforts would have been in vain.

As Zhang Yi walked towards her, Wu Chengyu stepped forward, adjusting his hair and straightening his custom blue uniform. "Are you from the West Hill Base? Did my father send you?" he asked.

"West Hill Base? What's that?" Zhang Yi replied, puzzled by the unfamiliar name.

Seeing them fully armed, Wu Chengyu mistook them for personnel from a refuge organization. With a slight smile, he introduced himself: "I'm Wu Chengyu. My father is Wu Jianguo, the director of the Tianhai City CZ Bureau. You must be familiar with his name."

Wu Chengyu's appearance was somewhat comical. Despite his expensive hairstyle and custom uniform, over a month in the apocalypse without a bath or clean clothes left him looking barely better than a beggar. Yet he still flaunted his status, which only made him more laughable.

Zhang Yi, smiling, asked, "Are you familiar with the West Hill organization?"

He wanted to gather intelligence about this group. Wu Chengyu, however, looked confused. "You're not from West Hill? Then you must be from another refuge. Strange, this place is closest to West Hill; why would they send you instead?"

Zhang Yi deduced multiple high-level refuges in Tianhai City, recalling similar mentions by Zhang Yuan and Cai Mingyu at Cloud Manor. These refuges were not the emergency shelters set up for the public but more secure and exclusive locations.

"How much do you know about the refuges?" Zhang Yi probed further.

Sensing something amiss, Wu Chengyu realized these people weren't sent to rescue him. "You're not from a refuge? I don't know much, just that there are some places like that."

He bit his lip. "If we had known the snowstorm would get this bad, I'd be there now!"

Seeing Wu Chengyu's lack of useful information, Zhang Yi moved past him towards Yang Xinxin. Seeing Zhang Yi's group as saviors, the other students rushed to surround Uncle You and Fatty Xu.

"My father is Wang Chongming, chairman of Chongming Group. Get me out of here, and he'll pay you any amount!"

"My dad is Li Gang, and my mom is Zhang Cuiyun. You know what those names mean in Tianhai City!"

"Take me out, and I'll pay you. If you want to be an official, my parents can arrange that too!"

The students' eyes were filled with desperation and a strange madness. They had been surviving in this dire situation for too long, and seeing a glimmer of hope, they clung to it desperately. Uncle You and Fatty Xu, uncomfortable with the situation, realized they couldn't rescue everyone without burdening themselves.

Unlike Zhang Yi, they lacked the heart to dismiss the students harshly. Despite their awkwardness, they couldn't bear to refuse outright. However, none of the students dared approach Zhang Yi, sensing an intimidating aura around him, enhanced by the golden Desert Eagle he held.

Zhang Yi, exuding a palpable killing intent, walked to Yang Xinxin. Lu Keran, pale and frightened, instinctively wanted to flee but couldn't muster the courage. Yang Xinxin, on the other hand, raised her delicate face, looking at Zhang Yi with innocent eyes.

Crouching down, Zhang Yi looked into her pretty eyes, asking gently, "You're Yang Xinxin, right?"

"Yes," she nodded.

"I'm Zhang Yi. Your sisters, Yang Siya and Zhou Ke'er, have sent me to rescue you. Will you come with me?" he asked.

"Okay," Yang Xinxin replied without hesitation. In her current situation, anyone willing to save her wasn't an enemy.

Zhang Yi nodded. "Alright, let's go."

"Wait... please wait!" Yang Xinxin suddenly said.

Curious, Zhang Yi tilted his head. "What is it?"

"Can you do me a favor?" Yang Xinxin asked earnestly, her eyes clear and bright like gems.

"What kind of favor? Don't ask for something too complicated, like saving all your classmates," Zhang Yi joked.

Yang Xinxin looked towards the icy corridor, where the sounds of battle still echoed. The clashing metal noises were nerve-wracking. "Can you stop them from fighting? I'm worried for him," she said.

"Oh?" Zhang Yi looked towards the corridor, hearing the ongoing fierce fight. The battle was intense but not one-sided.

"Just stopping them is doable," he said, thinking it wouldn't be too hard. With plans to have Yang Xinxin help him with network maintenance at the refuge, gaining her favor now would be advantageous.

Seeing Yang Xinxin nod, Zhang Yi smiled. He stood up, approached Fatty Xu, and whispered, "Come with me."

As Zhang Yi moved, the students instinctively stepped aside, not wanting to get too close. Fatty Xu, relieved to escape the students' pleas, followed Zhang Yi out the door.

Chapter 220: Why Are You the Nation's Hope?

Zhang Yi and his companions entered the corridor where Liang Yue was fiercely battling the black monster. The ground was littered with steel needles, emitting a dark, eerie glow. Zhang Yi, wearing cut-resistant gloves, picked up two of the needles and stored them in his spatial space for later study.

"Fatty, do it!" Zhang Yi signaled to Fatty Xu.

Fatty Xu stepped forward, raising his hands towards Liang Yue and the black monster, activating his powers. "Crack—" Huge cracks appeared around the ice and snow corridor. Liang Yue's pupils contracted as she quickly retreated.

The next moment, hundreds of tons of ice and snow collapsed from above, completely blocking the corridor and separating Liang Yue from the black monster. Enraged, Liang Yue turned to Zhang Yi and Fatty Xu, trembling with fury.

"You!" she shouted.

Fatty Xu hid behind Zhang Yi, terrified. Zhang Yi, however, smiled and placed his hand on the trigger of his Desert Eagle. "No need to thank me. We're all human, and it's only right to help each other."

Liang Yue was furious, her whole body shaking. She raised her Tang sword, pointing its tip at Zhang Yi's face. "Do you know what you've done? I was just about to defeat that monster!"

"This was my last chance. If I missed this opportunity, the monster wouldn't fall for my trick again!" she shouted, her voice filled with despair. Liang Yue had burned all her strength for this showdown, and failure meant death for her and her students, one by one.

Zhang Yi looked innocent. "Oh? I just wanted to help, afraid you'd lose to the monster."

He pointed to the classroom where Yang Xinxin was. "If not for your student worrying about your safety and asking for my help, I wouldn't have intervened."

Liang Yue's eyes blazed with anger and hatred for Zhang Yi. "You bastard!" She charged at Zhang Yi, her speed like a whirlwind, not inferior to the black monster's.

Seeing her intent to kill, Zhang Yi's expression turned serious. "Such a pretty woman, but anger doesn't suit you!" he said, raising his Desert Eagle.

"Bang!"

The enormous recoil shook Zhang Yi's shoulder. The bullet's power, enhanced by his abilities, was immense. Liang Yue, determined to kill Zhang Yi, swiftly slashed her sword, creating a fan-shaped arc that deflected the bullet into the walls on either side.

A top-tier iaido master could cut through a tennis ball traveling 820 km/h. With her abilities, Liang Yue could even split a bullet. Within moments, she was upon Zhang Yi, her sword ready to strike.

Zhang Yi smiled, waiting for this moment. A Dimensional Gate opened in front of him. Liang Yue sensed the danger but couldn't stop in time. "Whoosh—" She disappeared into the gate. Zhang Yi counted to two and released her, ensuring she wasn't trapped long enough to die.

Reappearing, Liang Yue collapsed, exhausted and terrified. "What was that?" she gasped, weak from the fight with the monster and her drained energy. Days of hunger and fatigue left her unable to stand.

Zhang Yi shrugged. "I tried to help, but you attacked me. What a difficult woman to understand." He walked over and took her Tang sword. "I'll keep this dangerous weapon safe for you," he said with a smile. The sword, capable of splitting bullets, was a rare and valuable weapon.

Liang Yue glared at him, seething with anger. "Give me back Loong Roar Sword!" She nearly fainted from the loss of her precious sword. "Alright, calm down. Getting angry is bad for you. Students, help your teacher to rest," Zhang Yi instructed.

Several students nervously approached, helping Liang Yue to a corner. She leaned against the wall, too weak to stand, glaring at Zhang Yi with impotent rage. "Who are you? Why are you here?" she demanded.

Zhang Yi looked at Yang Xinxin and replied, "I'm here on behalf of her family to take her away."

"Take her away?" Liang Yue and the other students looked hopeful. "Can you take us too?" they pleaded. "It's too dangerous here. That monster has killed hundreds of us already!"

"Please, take us with you! My father will reward you greatly! You can name any price!"

"My father is a director!"

"My father is a minister!"

Zhang Yi grew impatient with their pleas. "I'm here only to take her away. The rest of you should contact your own families for help."

The students, realizing Zhang Yi wouldn't help them, grew desperate. "We can't reach our families! Please help us! We'll reward you richly later!"

Liang Yue recognized Zhang Yi and his companions' strength and knew they were exceptional. "You must have a good place to live and plenty of food," she said. Please, save these children. They are the future hope of our nation!"

The students looked at Zhang Yi eagerly, but he only laughed coldly. "The nation's hope? Are you saying only the children of officials and the rich are the hope, while ordinary children are not?"

"I don't see anything special about you. Is it your arrogance?" Zhang Yi scoffed, shaking his head. "If you're so exceptional, you should be able to survive on your own. Sorry, I'm just an ordinary kid. I can't save you 'elites.'"