

Ice Age 811

Chapter 811: The Refugees

Su Nuanxi was so terrified she nearly collapsed, her eyes rolling back as she fainted on the spot with a thud. Those who followed behind witnessed the scene, and some couldn't help vomiting immediately.

The foreigner White Mo clutched his head and screamed, "O-M-G! My God, this is literally hell! Is Satan here?" They had seen dead bodies before and thought their mental fortitude was strong enough. But human nature made such scenes unbearable for them.

Zhang Yi curiously looked at them and asked Li Zongyu, "What? Haven't you eaten any?" Li Zongyu's face turned ghastly pale, clearly severely tested by what he saw. But he retorted angrily, "We're humans, not animals! How could we do such things!"

His girlfriend Zhang Weiwei stepped forward indignantly, meeting Zhang Yi's gaze without fear. "Mr. Zhang, don't insult our dignity! We'd rather starve than eat that!" Zhang Yi chuckled, "Then how did you solve your food problem?"

Zhang Weiwei explained, "Since this is a tourist island, there were large food reserves. We stayed at the island's hotel initially, and the warehouse supplies lasted us months." "Later, Zongyu and others went hunting. The waters around Rockflow Island are rich in seafood, which sustained us."

Zhang Yi countered, "This is the tropics at minus twenty degrees! Coastal fish must have disappeared." Zhang Weiwei blinked, "There's a giant sea turtle species unique to Rockflow Island. Extremely resilient." "That became our main food source."

Zhang Yi lowered his eyelids, then suddenly looked up at Li Zongyu. "How's the turtle soup taste?" Li Zongyu averted his eyes, "We were just grateful to have food. Taste didn't matter." He pulled Zhang Weiwei aside, having her lead the students out - the bloody scene was too much for them.

Zhang Yi had brought them here specifically to teach Su Nuanxi a lesson, to shut her up and stop bothering him. It also served as a warning to others. Zhu Yunque had long since run outside vomiting violently, probably cursing Zhang Yi internally for making her see this.

Yet to Zhang Yi and the crew, these scenes were nothing extraordinary. During their survival days in Tianhai City, they'd witnessed far worse. For instance, have you seen hundreds of thousands of zombies swarm human defenses, tearing people apart until only bone fragments remained? Trivial scenes, all trivial.

Zhang Yi glanced at the unconscious Su Nuanxi, feeling somewhat disappointed. All bark and no bite. He'd originally planned to treat her to some authentic nine-turn intestines. But she got lucky by fainting first.

By Zhang Yi's nature, he'd happily leave this woman on the island to fend for herself. But firstly, Zhu Zheng had ordered all Rockflow Group members must be retrieved to prevent information leaks. Secondly, with Li Zongyu and others present, Zhang Yi couldn't go too far. So he called two male Rockflow Group members to carry Su Nuanxi, then left this hellhole for the port.

Soon they reached the port area. While deserted with corpses strewn about earlier, it now bustled with crowds noisy as a marketplace. Zhang Yi noticed all the corpses had disappeared. He understood immediately but remained indifferent - such things were commonplace.

The Golden Edge remained docked, with Old Tian ordering every crew member to stand guard with submachine guns, strictly preventing any refugees from boarding. But refugees and locals packed the entire port - thousands visible at a glance! More kept arriving from across the island. Some sneaky ones even braved the subzero temperatures, attempting to climb aboard through the icy waters.

Old Tian had no choice but to fire warning shots and use rubber bullets for crowd control. "Back off! Our captain isn't here! No one approaches or I'll shoot!" Not that Old Tian was soft-hearted, but unsure if these were Zhang Yi's targets, he dared not use live ammunition. This restraint only emboldened the crowd.

Some offered Rolex watches as bribes. "I've got billions in savings - half yours if you take me! This gold watch is deposit!" Others played the sympathy card with children. "Please take us! We'll die here eventually!" "Shouldn't women and children go first? Hey, make way for us!"

Some flaunted connections - uncles in Huaxu Kingdom ministries, fathers as Jiangnan Region officials. Some knelt begging pathetically just for passage. Thousands clamored with individual reasons but one unified plea: take them from this hellhole. The crowding even pushed some into the freezing sea, their screams piercing.

Zhu Yunque stared dumbfounded. "How are there so many people left?" Zhang Yi sneered, "Tropical islands attract the wealthy. You think they'd starve?" "Besides, when food runs out, there's always... reserves."

Zhu Yunque looked puzzled. "Reserves? You mean seafood?" Zhang Yi said flatly, "During a famine when many starved, Emperor Hui of Jin asked, 'Why not eat meat porridge?'" "People mocked his stupidity." "But consider it differently." "That phrase is actually terrifying."

Realization dawned on Zhu Yunque, combining with the earlier horrific scenes to send chills down her spine. "Let's go. No time to waste here. The world's full of misery - I can't save everyone." Zhang Yi fired his gun skyward, immediately drawing attention. Their combat suits marked them clearly as ship personnel.

The cleverest rushed forward begging. "Please take me! I'm Huaxu Kingdom - listen to my perfect accent!" "Me Huaxu people too, save me!" "Me, Huaxu person work!" Foreigners showcased their broken Chinese desperately, their poor attempts at communication instantly recognizable.

Chapter 812: My Rules Are The Rules

Zhang Yi said coldly, "Step aside. We'll discuss your matters after we board the ship."

But these people weren't fools - without Zhang Yi's promise, they refused to move.

"No! You must promise to take us with you first!"

"We don't want to stay on this island for even one more second! This place is literally hell on earth!"

Zhang Yi noticed some among the crowd growing restless, their murderous eyes revealing they'd killed many before.

A cold smile appeared on Zhang Yi's lips. It seemed some wanted to take them hostage and seize the ship.

Behind Zhang Yi, Zhu Yunque and others looked conflicted, unsure what to do.

Zhu Yunque murmured, "There are too many people. The Golden Edge couldn't possibly take them all. Otherwise..."

She didn't finish her sentence, but given her usual way of doing things, she would have taken them all. The Rockflow Group members felt extremely fortunate they'd followed Zhang Yi out of the caves. With so many people now begging, who would be willing to take them?

Zhang Yi drew his pistol without another word and fired two shots - "Bang! Bang!" - at those foreigners who had pretended to be from Huaxu Kingdom earlier.

The first bullet killed the guy from Neon Pirate.

Seeing someone die, fear finally appeared on the refugees' faces.

"Last warning - MOVE!"

Understanding his intent, all crew members raised their submachine guns, deliberately pulling back the bolts with a loud "clack!"

At Zhang Yi's command, they wouldn't hesitate to gun down anyone blocking their way!

Some blocking their path retreated fearfully, slowly opening a path.

As Zhang Yi stepped forward, suddenly the crowd knelt with a collective "thud!"

"Please, save us! Staying here means certain death! For God's sake!" begged a blue-eyed blonde woman, tears streaming down her face.

Zhang Yi ignored her completely - such appeals meant nothing to him.

A man kowtowed repeatedly, "I know there are too many, but could you at least take my child? He's only eight! He has his whole life ahead!"

Zhang Yi led the Rockflow Group forward through the kneeling crowd.

Strangely, he felt completely numb to these pitiful moral blackmail attempts.

Oh right, he'd experienced this before - back at Yuelu Residential Complex.

His former neighbors who'd once turned against him had begged the same way.

While Zhang Yi remained unmoved, Zhu Yunque had never faced such a situation before.

This young lady had lived comfortably in Blizzard City even after the apocalypse.

Her biggest worries had been lack of fresh vegetables and newest cosmetics.

A Huaxu Kingdom woman holding a child noticed Zhu Yunque's conflicted expression and crawled forward on her knees like grasping at straws.

A crew member immediately aimed his gun: "What are you doing?"

The woman froze but lifted her child, crying to Zhu Yunque: "We're compatriots! Please save my child!"

Zhu Yunque couldn't take it anymore. She tugged Zhang Yi's sleeve.

"Hmm?" Zhang Yi turned with icy eyes.

Clenching her teeth, she said, "At least take our compatriots! The ship should have space for several hundred more."

Overhearing this, the surrounding people erupted as if seeing their only hope:

"I'm from Huaxu Kingdom! Take me!"

"Compatriots should help each other, right?"

Zhang Yi frowned.

He'd never been abroad or interacted much with foreigners.

But he'd been screwed over plenty.

Were all those who betrayed him foreigners?

He observed the mother and child - though haggard, the mother's refined beauty still showed.

Most vacationers on Rockflow Island, whether Huaxu nationals or expats, had lived privileged lives before.

Zhang Yi wasn't heartless, but his priority was his own interests.

Taking these people would undoubtedly create complications - and he hated complications.

Suddenly, someone started singing the Huaxu Kingdom national anthem.

Soon, the entire port resonated with the solemn song.

Exhausted but determined faces stared hopefully at Zhang Yi.

Foreigners mingled among them, mouthing along badly.

Most amusing were blonde foreigners pretending to sing.

Zhang Yi considered - taking some back could work. As discussed with Zhu Zheng, they needed laborers for Tianhai City.

These people would work for just a few meals - cost-effective.

But he couldn't possibly take them all.

Zhou Ke'er, sensing his hesitation, whispered: "Take the Huaxu citizens. Tianhai City's population has dwindled - the bases need workers. They'll be useful."

She understood Zhang Yi best - he never did anything without benefit.

The reasoning was sound.

Nodding, Zhang Yi said, "True, Tianhai City needs laborers."

To Zhu Yunque he said, "As a favor to you, I'll take Huaxu citizens."

This being the first time Zhang Yi heeded her suggestion, Zhu Yunque was overjoyed.

Like a child getting candy, she happily announced: "All Huaxu citizens, report here!"

Zhang Yi declared: "Everyone must undergo verification before boarding!"

"Once aboard, follow all orders or be thrown overboard immediately!"

The crowd erupted in joy.

Huaxu citizens wept with happiness.

But most islanders were foreigners who protested angrily.

Someone pointed at White Mo among the Rockflow Group: "Why does he get to board? That's unfair!"

"Right! Unfair!"

The crowd found their rallying cry.

White Mo panicked, rushing to cling to Zhang Yi's leg.

"Oh, Mr. Zhang! I'm Huaxu in spirit! I swear to God! I'll change nationalities immediately upon return!"

Zhang Yi couldn't help laughing.

Glancing at the protesters, he sneered: "Fairness? What's that? Did you think I came here to discuss fairness with you?"

"Go beg your own countries to rescue you instead of barking here!"

The crowd grew increasingly disorderly as foreign discontent boiled over.

Several foreign men moved toward Zhang Yi, suddenly drawing guns and firing at him and his group.

But the bullets vanished without effect.

Without even looking, Zhang Yi drew twin pistols and fired rapidly into the crowd:

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

Firing into dense crowds was normally dangerous due to collateral damage.

But for Zhang Yi, that wasn't a concern.

Chapter 813: Selection [Plus 1]

Zhang Yi immediately emptied his magazine, blasting the heads off all the gunmen in the crowd!

Not just those firing the guns, but also those who gave him a bad feeling.

The island was not short of murderers; at least one-third of the people here had personally killed someone!

Regardless of whether they intended to attack Zhang Yi, killing them brought him no guilt whatsoever.

All the crew raised their guns in defense. Zhang Yi reloaded with one hand, holding another ten bullets in his palm.

“Anyone else have objections?”

No one dared to object anymore. The power Zhang Yi displayed made everyone think they had just seen a superhuman!

Indeed, a portion of the island’s residents had awakened superhuman abilities, so they had some understanding of this.

But none had ever seen a superhuman as powerful and terrifying as Zhang Yi.

Everyone timidly retreated to the side, no longer daring to block Zhang Yi’s path.

Zhang Yi led his people to the harbor. He said to Old Tian, “Strictly enforce the standards. Don’t let a single non-Huaxu Kingdom person board the ship.”

Old Tian scratched his head. “Mr. Zhang, how do we verify if they’re from Huaxu Kingdom? It might be difficult to ask them to show ID cards now!”

“Figure it out yourself.”

Zhang Yi said indifferently.

If he had to make every decision, then what were these subordinates for?

Zhang Yi had the Rockflow Group members go up to the deck first. Their rooms had already been prepared on the second level below the cabin.

The space was not large, but more than enough to accommodate them, ensuring basic survival.

Old Tian called over several crew members and began recruiting new members on the spot.

“Everyone line up in two rows, come one by one. If you’re not from Huaxu Kingdom, you can leave early. Don’t waste time here!”

Old Tian shouted loudly into a megaphone, then said to several crew, “This is the most chaotic time. If anyone tries anything desperate, no mercy—kill on sight!”

The crew sneered and nodded.

This kind of scene was just a small matter for them.

When the apocalypse came, the fighting at Chaoyu Harbor was far more brutal just to survive.

Soon, two long queues formed at the harbor.

Zhang Yi did not board the ship but watched from behind to prevent any trouble.

He took out two sofa seats from the dimensional space and had Zhou Ke’er sit beside him. The two munched sunflower seeds while watching the show.

Zhu Yunque did not have this luxury.

She snorted lightly, crossing her arms and standing aside, looking somewhat like a servant attending to the two.

Sensing something was off, she moved a bit further away.

The two long queues were a mix of all kinds of people; no one wanted to miss this opportunity.

Even those not from Huaxu Kingdom intended to give it a try.

The first person to come for the interview approached Old Tian.

Old Tian glared at him. "Palace Jade Liquor!"

The man was stunned for a moment, then hurriedly replied, "One hundred eighty per cup!"

Old Tian laughed and gave a thumbs-up. "Passed. Wait on the deck to board!"

The man was so excited he nearly fainted on the spot and quickly boarded.

Those behind him seemed to understand the test questions and immediately started chattering.

Nothing else, just cramming Huaxu Kingdom common knowledge.

Another person came forward.

Old Tian asked, "What is 'Heroes Gather'?"

The man quickly smiled, "What Heroes Gather? I think it's a radish meeting."

This person also passed smoothly.

He smugly glanced back, making a victory sign, then hurried up the gangplank.

Passing by Zhang Yi and the others, he bowed politely to express gratitude to Zhang Yi.

The crew's usual entertainment was playing these games, watching dramas, or listening to broadcasts, so they had plenty of tricks.

And they could guarantee no repetition.

"I ask you, when does one plus one equal three?"

"Huh? What... what kind of question is that?"

A scruffy-bearded man in front looked utterly confused.

Old Tian glared. "I can tell at a glance you're not human! Ah no, not from Huaxu Kingdom. Go play somewhere else!"

The man panicked. "No, big brother, sir! Listen to my accent, I'm a genuine Guangdong East person!"

Old Tian snorted coldly. "So what if you're from Guangdong East? Does that mean you don't watch the Spring Festival Gala? If you can't answer, you can't board!"

The man was helpless. "Not watching the Spring Festival Gala isn't a crime!"

Old Tian knew this guy was from Huaxu Kingdom; foreigners rarely had such perfect pronunciation.

"Alright, alright, you can go!"

The man was overwhelmed with gratitude and hurried onto the ship, fearing Old Tian might change his mind.

Next was a skinny, monkey-like young man with a strange accent.

“Hello boss, I’m from Huaxu Kingdom. I’m a genuine Huaxu Kingdom citizen. See, I even have an ID card. Please let me board.”

Old Tian took the ID card and saw the name “Jin Xiangtai” written on it.

He stared at Jin Xiangtai for a few seconds. “But you look like you’re from New Rohan, and your accent is a bit strange.”

Jin Xiangtai panicked and hurried to explain. “No, no, I’m not from New Rohan. I’m a native of the Western Border. My accent comes from eating lamb skewers.”

Old Tian stroked his chin and suddenly asked, “What hair oil do you use?”

“Sidangkang, I use Sidangkang!”

Jin Xiangtai quickly answered.

Old Tian laughed heartily. “I use Sidangkang too. Alright, you can go!”

The skinny guy bowed so low it seemed he was about to touch the ground.

“Thanks a hundred times for the boss’s pass!”

Just then, a voice shouted loudly behind in New Rohan language:

“He’s not from Huaxu Kingdom, he’s from New Rohan, he’s from New Rohan! Fake, he’s a liar, don’t let him board!”

Jin Xiangtai turned and saw his old friend Cui Zihao.

Jin Xiangtai sneered, “Watch carefully, I have a Huaxu Kingdom ID. I love Huaxu Kingdom the most! I asked you to come with me before, but you refused. Now you regret it, huh?”

Cui Zihao’s face flushed red with anger, heat rising instantly.

“Damn, old Ma, shake it! Chinese is so hard to learn, I can’t!”

Jin Xiangtai’s eyes widened immediately.

“What’s so hard? It’s all like this.”

“If you say Chinese is hard, why didn’t you work hard to improve over the years?”

“Instead of regretting it only when you need it.”

Cui Zihao was almost furious enough to explode.

But all he could do was watch Jin Xiangtai smugly board the ship.

Because he knew how strong Zhang Yi and the others were, and how ruthless Zhang Yi was—shooting to kill without warning—so the overall order at the scene remained relatively peaceful.

Even when some were identified as foreigners, at most they knelt down kowtowing, weeping, throwing tantrums, and rolling on the ground.

But such actions were pointless.

The people from Tianhai City had seen hell far more brutal than this; none of them would show mercy.

Chapter 814: A Black Dragon is Still a Dragon

The process of screening boarding passengers had been relatively peaceful—until they encountered a mother.

A woman approached with her child. She had indeed passed Old Tian's test, and he had approved her boarding. However, Old Tian stopped her child, refusing to let him on board no matter what.

The woman immediately burst into tears, wailing loudly at the port.

"I'm a citizen of Huaxu Kingdom! Look at me—every part of me is Huaxu-made! How dare you deny me boarding?"

Old Tian replied coldly, "Madam, you are indeed a Huaxu citizen. But do you really think we're fools when it comes to this child?"

Zhang Yi glanced over curiously and couldn't help but laugh when he saw the situation.

The woman had a child with her, about seven or eight years old, seemingly healthy with large innocent eyes looking around, unaware of any wrongdoing. However, the child's chocolate-colored skin tone clearly didn't match typical Asian features.

Old Tian said, "Don't take us for fools. How could your child have this skin tone? We made it clear—only Huaxu citizens are allowed on board. I might have overlooked it if you were an overseas Chinese, but this? You think we're blind?"

The woman grew agitated upon hearing this.

"I'm not lying! He really is my child—mine and Morian's!"

At this point, the expressions of Old Tian, the crew members, and even Zhang Yi shifted.

Initially, they thought the woman was trying to sneak a foreign child aboard. But now it seemed she had married a foreigner and given birth to a mixed-race child?

This revelation sparked murmurs among the passengers already on board, watching the scene unfold.

"Well... marriage is a personal choice, so it's hard to judge. But personally, I can't accept it."

Zhang Yi stood up and walked over, waving dismissively at the woman.

"Sorry, but my ship won't accommodate you or your child. Leave."

The woman's eyes widened in disbelief as she stared at Zhang Yi.

"But I'm a Huaxu citizen! My son is too! Aren't you a rescue ship sent by Huaxu Kingdom? Why won't you let us board?"

She trembled with fear—originally, only her son was denied boarding, but now even her own eligibility was revoked. She was terrified!

From the crowd emerged a tall man resembling Will Smith—Morian, the woman's husband.

"Hi, man! What's up? This isn't right—I strongly protest!"

Zhang Yi sneered, "Can you just piss off? This is my ship, and I decide who gets on."

Morian looked awkward. "But my wife and child are Huaxu citizens—they're your compatriots!"

The moment these words left his mouth, the crowd erupted.

Zhang Yi's expression darkened instantly.

"Compatriots my ass!"

All the ethnic Huaxu passengers began cursing.

"Bastard! Stop spouting nonsense! Who the hell are you calling compatriots?"

"It's just an ID card and a household register! We share no blood ties—stop being disgusting!"

The woman seemed determined to fight for her case. She patted her child, who stepped forward and loudly recited an essay titled "I Love My Motherland!"

"I, Chocolate, was born a Huaxu citizen! I love my motherland!"

"Don't doubt my loyalty just because of my appearance."

"Black dragons are also dragons!"

Zhang Yi felt his stomach churn—he genuinely wanted to vomit.

Some passengers couldn't take it either. Ma Wenzheng leaned over the railing and shouted, "Little darkie, you don't belong to Huaxu. This isn't your place!"

Chocolate grew frantic, knowing this ship was their only hope for survival. He pointed angrily at Ma Wenzheng and yelled, "You're the ones who should leave!"

However, not everyone shared the same opinion.

For instance, Zhou Andi—the foreign-worshipping lapdog from earlier—adjusted his glasses and spoke with an air of worldly concern.

"He's just a child. Regardless of his father's origin, his mother is undeniably Huaxu."

Noticing the surrounding gazes, he elaborated confidently,

"Historically, the Huaxu ethnicity has always been an amalgamation of many peoples. We even had Kunlun slaves in ancient times. I think we can accept them."

Chocolate's mother continued pleading with Zhang Yi.

"Please treat us equally—we're Huaxu citizens! You can't discriminate against us. This is wrong!"

Zhang Yi rubbed his nose.

"Honestly, I'm not the most educated guy."

"Nor do I have particularly high ideological awareness."

He smiled at the woman who had married a foreigner and pointed at her and her child.

"I just plain dislike people like you. So today, you're not setting foot on my ship."

The woman pointed at Zhang Yi, nearly choking on her words.

"You—you—you're bullying us! Waaah!"

She burst into loud sobs right in front of everyone.

"This is so unfair! Why won't you let us board? What rule have we broken?"

Zhang Yi laughed. "Oh, you've broken no rules. I just don't want you on my ship. What are you gonna do about it?"

He leaned down tauntingly. "Mad?"

He couldn't be bothered to reason with someone so delusional—direct confrontation was more his style.

The woman hugged her child and wailed. Morian, seeing the hopelessness of the situation, shook his head helplessly.

Then, without another glance at his wife and child, he silently disappeared into the crowd.

Originally, they had planned for the woman to board first, then secretly lower a rope for him to climb up. But with that plan foiled, he had no intention of shouldering the burden.

As before, he chose to abandon them.

The woman and Chocolate cried hysterically at the port.

Some bystanders couldn't bear it and tried pulling them away.

The woman slapped the ground and screamed, "I won't leave! I refuse!"

The crowd grew impatient. "Do whatever you want, but don't block the way! We're still waiting to board!"

These weren't the old days—her public meltdown wouldn't guilt-trip Zhang Yi into submission.

Everyone had their own problems. Nobody had patience for her tantrums—it was just annoying.

However, her outburst reignited chaos at the scene.

Some genuinely pitied the child, reigniting hope in others.

A blonde woman carrying a child approached Zhang Yi directly.

Her face was devoid of hope, as lifeless as a wooden puppet.

"Can you save my child? He's so young... I don't want his life to end like this."

"It's fine if I die, but please let my son live."

Chapter 815: You Are Proud, You Are So Great

Zhang Yi looked down at the baby in her arms.

The baby's pale skin was as pure as snow, peacefully asleep, breathing softly in a way that stirred deep pity.

In Zhang Yi's mind, he couldn't help but recall when the apocalypse first arrived, he had also come into contact with such a tiny child.

That was Xie Limei's daughter.

Back then, she had survived by exploiting Old You's sympathy, but in the end, Zhang Yi had dealt with her.

Her daughter hadn't survived either; she froze to death on a stormy snowy night.

Everyone who witnessed that scene felt heartbroken.

Protecting infants is an instinct of all living beings.

"Save the child! At the very least, let the child live!"

"It's just a child; it won't take much of your food. Give the child a chance!"

The crowd on the shore began shouting loudly.

Various languages expressed the same emotion.

Some parents, seeing this, carried their own children over and looked at Zhang Yi with pleading eyes.

A trace of nostalgia flickered in Zhang Yi's eyes.

He missed his homeland and the once-thriving years.

They were all gone with the passage of time.

If not for the apocalypse, many children in Tianhai City could have lived happily.

He raised his head to look at the mother. "Thank you for reminding me—the child is the hope for the future."

The mother's numb eyes gradually brightened a little. "Then, my child..."

Zhang Yi continued, "So after this, I plan to donate some supplies to my hometown city, to help those children living in hardship."

The mother was stunned on the spot; others did not expect Zhang Yi to be so cold-hearted.

"Hey, are you even a man? Just standing there watching people die!"

A burly man shouted angrily, "It's one thing if you ignore us adults, but to watch children fall into despair with your eyes wide open—are you still human?"

A Britannian man shook his head.

"Do men from the Huaxu Kingdom lack even basic gentlemanly spirit? This is utterly despicable!"

The crowd's emotions ignited; they angrily denounced Zhang Yi, thinking him too cold and heartless.

Zhu Yunque couldn't help but step forward. Looking at the tiny baby in the swaddling clothes, she said to Zhang Yi:

"Why not take the children with you? They are the hope for the future. This world is not over yet; children are tomorrow."

"That lady is right. Children are the future. Without children, even if you survive, does humanity have a future?"

Immediately, people applauded and cheered for Zhu Yunque's words.

The voice came from the ship. It was the fake foreigner, Zhou Andi.

He leaned against the railing, chest pounding indignantly.

“Save the children! Don’t be so cold-blooded!”

He encouraged others nearby to shout along.

“Children are innocent! Children are innocent!”

Many people were moved by Zhou Andi’s voice and shouted in unison at Zhang Yi:

“Children are innocent! Save the children!”

They looked at Zhang Yi with indignation, feeling his heart was too cold and hard, almost inhuman.

This collective condemnation of Zhang Yi made them feel their souls were elevated, their character noble.

Even though many of these people had recently eaten white meat.

But they always liked to be lenient with themselves and harsh with others.

Zhang Yi never expected these people to enjoy such commotion so much.

He couldn’t help but think of the neighbors in the Yuelu Residential Complex.

They had truly experienced desperate situations, so although cruel, at least they understood the humility due to being human.

But these people in front of him lacked even the most basic respect for life.

They had been on the island too long and still seemed unaware of what the world had become.

Zhu Yunque quietly advised, “Take the children on board. They don’t take up much space. They also eat very little.”

A cold smile appeared at the corner of Zhang Yi’s mouth as he put his hands in his pockets.

He turned to stare at Zhu Yunque and retorted, “Oh? It sounds so simple, but there are so many people here. I won’t say exactly how many children, but there must be a hundred or so!”

“Many are two or three years old, and some are even infants in swaddling clothes. Can you take care of them?”

“Do you know how troublesome it is to care for them?”

“The sea voyage takes two months. Just taking care of so many children will exhaust you.”

“Besides, even if I could save them, why should I?”

Zhang Yi spoke loudly.

This made many people glare at him in anger.

Ignoring the outrage, Zhang Yi continued, “My city has twenty million people. I won’t talk about such a large number of children—there must be hundreds of thousands, right?”

“But after the apocalypse? How many survived? Altogether, it probably doesn’t exceed a hundred.”

“Who cared about their survival?”

“No, better said, who has the means to care about their survival?”

Zhang Yi sneered repeatedly: “There are still many people living on the edge of life and death on Huaxu Kingdom’s land. If I have the ability, why wouldn’t I prioritize saving my own compatriots?”

He pointed to the baby in the mother’s arms.

“That’s right, he’s pitiful—so young and facing death. But what does that have to do with me? What obligation do I have to help him?”

“Instead of wasting extra care on him, why not help the compatriots around me?”

Zhou Andi on the ship shouted, “Those are just excuses! If you have the ability, why not save more people?”

“Don’t you know, if possible, we would rather give the chance to live to the children!”

Zhang Yi originally didn’t want to bother with this useless person, but after hearing this, he slowly turned his head, smiling and staring at Zhou Andi.

“Did you say that?”

Zhou Andi felt a chill run from head to toe at Zhang Yi’s gaze.

He only wanted to highlight his own gentlemanly pride to make everyone think highly of him, deliberately opposing Zhang Yi.

But how many people had Zhang Yi killed?

Zhou Andi, this foolish dog, had been personally killed by Zhang Yi several times over, in stronger groups.

That one look made his spine shiver.

Clap clap!

Zhang Yi clapped his hands and praised, “Good, very good, excellent! I admire people like you who spout righteousness and morality. Since you’re so proud, so great, I’ll give you this chance!”

Zhang Yi signaled to a crew member on the ship.

Immediately, a crew member approached and held Zhou Andi down.

Zhou Andi panicked, “What are you doing? Let me go! Let me go!”

The crew member sneered, “Fool, who do you think you’re talking to? Our captain is the notorious demon king of the Huaxu Kingdom. If you provoke him, you’re dead meat!”

With that, he dragged Zhou Andi toward the deck below while holding him down.

Zhang Yi said, “Since you are so honorable, willing to sacrifice yourself to save others, a gentleman helps others achieve their goals. Of course, I have to give you this chance!”

“Now, get off the ship! But I can also fulfill your wish—help you save one child.”

Chapter 816: The Faces of the Port

Under Zhang Yi’s signal, Zhu Yunque hurriedly took the child from his mother’s arms.

A smile appeared on the woman's face.

She looked at her child with lingering reluctance, one last time, then waved her hand to say goodbye.

They would never meet again in this lifetime.

"My child, you must grow up well and live well!"

She had no other wishes and slowly left this place, like a walking corpse, waiting for her life to end.

Meanwhile, Zhou Andi began to panic as he was being forced off the ship.

"Wait, wait! Hold on, I didn't mean it like that! I was just saying I could help take care of the child!"

"Mr. Zhang, there's no need for this! I was joking! I was really just talking!"

Earlier, when the crowd was teasing him, he thought it was no big deal, thinking the law wouldn't punish the mob, so he shouted loudly.

But when disaster fell on him, he was the fastest to admit his mistake.

Unfortunately, he no longer had a chance.

Zhang Yi didn't even glance at him and only smiled warmly, saying, "What a kind-hearted good man!"

He looked toward the crowd and spoke so everyone present could hear.

"I know some of you just now thought I was too cruel, showing no mercy at all."

“Sorry about that. Our ship’s resources are limited, and it takes more than three thousand kilometers from here back to the Huaxu Kingdom. We simply can’t bring too many people.”

He stepped aside and pointed to himself.

“But don’t say I’m inflexible. Now, if there’s anyone with great virtue willing to give up their chance to board the ship for those poor children, I would wholeheartedly support it!”

“Come on, anyone with that intention, come to me now, immediately!”

The Huaxu Kingdom people lined up silently one by one.

Those on the ship had learned from past experience and no longer dared to join in the teasing.

They had just seen Zhou Andi thrown off the ship.

Then, he knelt on the ground, begging Zhang Yi for forgiveness like a dog, admitting he was wrong.

But Zhang Yi didn’t even look at him again.

“Annoying idiot!”

One crew member thought Zhou Andi was too noisy and hit him unconscious with the butt of a gun.

The parents holding children saw this and begged the Huaxu Kingdom people in the line again.

“Li, we’ve been friends for many years. Please help me. Let Selina live!”

“Get lost! If she lives, I’m dead! We just worked together; we’re not friends!”

“Zou, I can give you all my money if you just give me your spot.”

“Go to hell! Hahaha, I hate your arrogant face the most. Seeing you die would please me more than anyone!”

...

The port revealed all kinds of human nature.

In the end, everyone was full of righteous words.

But when it came to paying their own ticket as the price, they were stingier than anyone.

Not to mention these foreign friends, even if their own fathers came, they might not be willing to trade places.

Zhang Yi said to Zhu Yunque, who was taking care of the child beside him, “See, these people are like this. The outside world is no different. You just have to get used to it. There’s really no need to be too kind to them.”

Zhu Yunque was speechless but held the baby tightly, her eyes full of tenderness.

Zhang Yi just shrugged.

Zhu Yunque was too naive, but soon she would pay the price for her youth.

He didn’t want to simply judge her as a good or bad woman.

Maybe because of maternal instinct, she had her kind side.

But such a fine quality was indeed terrible in the apocalypse.

Zhang Yi thought to himself: You should thank you have a good uncle; otherwise, you'd be the first one I threw into the sea to feed the fish.

Although Zhang Yi didn't like Zhu Yunque's way of doing things, for Zhu Zheng's sake, he had to slightly consider Zhu Yunque's feelings.

As Zhou Ke'er said,

"When hitting a dog, you must look at its master. Even if Zhang Yi doesn't care about one more friend for Zhu Yunque, at least don't make her one more enemy."

"Never provoke a woman, especially one with a background. She holds grudges deeply and can remember to hate you for a lifetime!"

Zhou Ke'er smiled and analyzed this from a woman's perspective for Zhang Yi.

Zhang Yi thought he should teach Zhu Yunque a lesson to cure her ridiculously naive kindness.

He looked at the child in Zhu Yunque's arms and slightly curled the corner of his mouth.

He believed it wouldn't be long before Zhu Yunque suffered because of her actions.

That would definitely be very interesting.

After more than an hour of screening, it was finally discovered that there were more than two hundred Huaxu Kingdom people on Rockflow Island!

Of course, among them were expatriates, but now to Zhang Yi, that made no difference.

What he needed was just a batch of laborers to bring to Tianhai City, a simple screening was enough.

After careful inspection confirmed no one carried weapons or communication devices, they were allowed to board the ship.

More than two hundred wasn't many, but the living space in the cabin felt crowded.

Zhang Yi didn't care.

"As long as they have a place to live, that's enough. I don't believe they dare to pick and choose."

Once everyone was on board, Zhang Yi had Old Tian give them a thorough lecture on the ship's rules.

All the rules could be summarized as one: unconditionally obey Captain Zhang and the crew's orders!

Anyone who dared to openly oppose would be thrown into the sea to feed the sharks by the crew.

The ship's living area was divided into three levels, following Western standards.

The top level was the living area for Zhang Yi and the crew.

Zhang Yi and Zhou Ke'er had the best quarters; the captain's bedroom had ample heating and hot water, an independent room over fifty square meters—very luxurious.

Next was Zhu Yunque and the crew; they lived on the same floor as Zhang Yi.

Zhu Yunque and Old Tian each had single rooms; the crew had standard double rooms.

The rooms weren't very spacious but were warm and comfortable.

The third level, located in the middle of the cabin, was where the Rockflow Group lived.

The environment here was crowded; seven or eight people squeezed into a narrow room, with no gender separation, so they had to arrange rooms themselves.

If the distribution was uneven, men and women mixed lived together. In such cases, don't expect much privacy.

The lowest level of the cabin was the fourth level.

This was where the other Huaxu Kingdom citizens and expatriates brought back lived, at the very bottom of the Golden Edge.

Originally a storage room, it was cleared out to temporarily serve as their residence.

It was more spacious; twenty to thirty people could live in one big room, with no gender division, but it provided a simple restroom.

Bathing was basically impossible, but basic heating was guaranteed. It wasn't very warm but cold enough not to kill anyone.

Thanks to advanced technology, they didn't need to provide labor for the ship's navigation.

Therefore, they were required not to leave their designated area to the upper spaces.

People crowded onto the Golden Edge and then went to their respective living quarters.

Once their luggage was put down and they had their own beds, they finally felt the heavy weight on their hearts lift completely.

"Finally leaving this damned hellhole!"

"On the other side of the sea, life must be much better!"

Those naive enough not to know the outside world now held hopeful expectations.

Chapter 817: Bravely Taking Responsibility

Zhang Yi called Old Tian to the captain's cabin.

"Can you handle managing over two hundred people down there?" Zhang Yi asked directly.

He hated dealing with troublesome matters in daily life, so he left such trivial tasks to Old Tian.

Old Tian grinned. "Don't worry, Mr. Zhang. After so many years at sea, I've dealt with all kinds of crew members. I've managed bigger ships with more people before."

"There won't be any trouble! It's just..."

He hesitated.

Noticing his odd expression, Zhang Yi smiled and said, "Speak your mind."

Old Tian admitted frankly, "These people aboard seem to be of unusual status, former dignitaries and elites. After a few comfortable days, some might start causing trouble."

"I don't give a damn about them, but I wonder if they might cause problems for you?"

Zhang Yi scoffed.

"There won't be any problems. Deal with them however you see fit. When necessary," he pointed to the gun at Old Tian's waist, "don't hesitate to empty the entire magazine."

If anyone dared misbehave after boarding, Zhang Yi wouldn't mind throwing their corpses into the sea to feed the sharks.

After all, human life held no value nowadays.

With Zhang Yi's assurance, Old Tian felt much more at ease.

A cruel smile crept onto his lips as he instinctively reached for the whip behind his back.

He had his own methods for disciplining unruly individuals.

Otherwise, how do you think managers dealt with slaves and laborers back at the Dawn Rain Base?

"Set sail! It's time to return!" Zhang Yi turned and went back to the cabin.

Old Tian licked his chapped lips, his face full of wicked glee.

Disciplining those self-important big shots was his favorite pastime.

Just then, a crew member approached and whispered something in his ear.

"Should we inform the captain?" the crew member asked.

Old Tian frowned. "If we bother the captain with every little thing, what use are we? We can handle this ourselves!"

He walked to the ship's edge and leaned over the railing to look down.

An unusual sight greeted him at the Golden Edge's hull.

Numerous hooks clung to the ship's side, with refugees scrambling up like locusts on strings.

Some windows below had opened, ready to receive them.

"Trying to pull this stunt, eh? Hehehe!" Old Tian's smiling face looked positively demonic.

The stowaways below turned pale when discovered.

Old Tian pulled out his submachine gun and aimed at the trespassers.

"Rat-tat-tat-tat-tat!!!"

Screams echoed outside the Golden Edge, soon swallowed by the icy northern wind.

The would-be stowaways were shot into the sea.

Those waiting inside to receive them saw no trespassers - only a bloody rain pouring down before corpses plopped into the freezing ocean.

"Ahhh!!" Several women shrieked in terror.

Others in the cabin wore gloomy expressions.

"How ruthless these people are!" someone couldn't help muttering.

The speaker immediately received sharp glares warning him to shut up.

He quickly complied, remembering Zhou Andi's example.

No one knew who might be next to get thrown overboard.

Once the ship sailed, the only way off was into the sea - certain death!

Someone cautiously checked the entrance for crew members before sighing in relief at finding none nearby.

The Rockflow Group members, packed eight to a room, enjoyed cramped quarters that paradoxically fostered a sense of intimate solidarity.

Foreigner White Mo and New Rohan official Che Haicheng shared a lower bunk.

As gunfire echoed outside, White Mo leaned against the cabin wall, his face full of melancholy.

"So brutal, they're so brutal. Killing so casually - how are they any different from those villains on the island?"

"Will we be killed midway too?"

Che Haicheng moved closer with a smile. "You're from Columbus Ocean - hard to say. That Mr. Zhang doesn't seem to like Columbus Ocean people much."

White Mo widened his eyes. "Oh God, don't scare me! You're making this feel like a medieval slave ship, with me as cargo to be tossed to the sharks at any moment!"

Che Haicheng grinned maliciously. "Who knows? We're thousands of kilometers from Huaxu Kingdom with one or two months of sailing ahead. Anything could happen."

He'd meant to frighten White Mo, but found himself frowning as he spoke.

"Let's hope for smooth sailing. Otherwise... we might end up as shark food. Or worse - their emergency rations."

White Mo hugged himself in growing terror. "Why hasn't anyone come to rescue me? Has Columbus Ocean really abandoned its citizens?"

.....

Zhang Yi returned to the cabin intending to summon Li Zongyu for a detailed discussion about the Divine Source.

Some questions weren't appropriate to ask on the island, but now he wouldn't miss this opportunity.

But he'd barely returned when he ran into Zhu Yunque hurrying toward him.

"Mr. Zhang, you're back! Do you have diapers and baby formula?" she asked urgently.

Zhang Yi spread his hands. "Do I look like someone who would have those things?"

Of course not - Zhang Yi was unmarried and childless.

Though in truth he did have them.

But he wasn't sharing.

Zhu Yunque frowned anxiously.

Her impulsive decision to bring the child aboard now haunted her.

The baby had woken crying nonstop in her room, leaving her flustered.

After much deliberation, she'd sought Zhou Ke'er's help.

Though lacking childcare experience herself, Zhou Ke'er's medical background made her more observant.

After examining the child, she concluded, "He's not sick. The crying probably means he's hungry or needs a diaper change."

Zhu Yunque froze. She'd never cared for a child before - how would she know how to change diapers?

Besides, where would they get diapers on this ship?

Zhou Ke'er suggested she ask Zhang Yi, knowing he had supplies though whether he'd share depended on his mood.

Thus unfolded the current scene.

Seeing Zhu Yunque's distress, Zhang Yi sighed before offering solemn encouragement:

"Since you chose to take responsibility, see it through properly. Go on, I support you! I believe you can be a good mother!"

Chapter 818: The Difficulty of Childcare

Zhang Yi's sincere expression left Zhu Yunque completely flustered.

"I... I..."

She stammered, unsure how to respond.

"I've never taken care of a child before either."

Zhang Yi said, "There's a first time for everything. Didn't you say before that children are easy to take care of? They eat little and sleep a lot. How much trouble could they be?"

He patted Zhu Yunque's shoulder. "I have faith in you. Just focus on taking care of the child during this time. I'll arrange for others to handle everything else."

After speaking, Zhang Yi gave her an encouraging look before walking away.

Zhu Yunque stood there helplessly, unable to come up with any solution after much thought.

At that moment, Zhou Ke'er came out of her room and crossed paths with Zhang Yi.

Zhang Yi gave her a peculiar look that made Zhou Ke'er chuckle involuntarily.

Zhou Ke'er approached Zhu Yunque and said gently, "That child has been crying nonstop. You should go check on him quickly!"

Zhu Yunque stamped her feet anxiously. "But I don't know what to do!"

Zhou Ke'er sighed. "First, get some rice porridge from the kitchen to feed him. Also, I noticed his swaddling clothes are soaked. You'll need to change his diaper immediately."

"But where would I find diapers for him?"

Zhou Ke'er replied, "He's been using makeshift diapers made from cloth scraps. It's not like we can find store-bought diapers here!"

As they were talking, Zhang Yi's voice came from behind.

"Ke'er, come here for a moment. With so many people on board, we need to discuss disease prevention measures to avoid outbreaks."

Zhou Ke'er said to Zhu Yunque, "You'd better get to it. I need to attend to this matter first."

Zhu Yunque wanted to ask Zhou Ke'er for help, but the latter had already left with quick, small steps.

Gritting her teeth, Zhu Yunque went to the kitchen first to have the cook prepare rice porridge for the child.

Then she had to go prepare diapers.

Before she even reached the room, the child's deafening cries could already be heard clearly through the ship's decent soundproofing.

Zhu Yunque took a deep breath and pushed the door open.

The child on the bed was crying his eyes out, wailing loudly. The sheets beneath him were soaked with yellow liquid.

Zhu Yunque turned pale and shrieked, "Ah! My bedsheet!"

In this weather, drying bedsheets would be extremely difficult, not to mention the mattress was probably soaked through.

How was she supposed to sleep now?

Zhu Yunque lamented her misfortune bitterly. For the first time, she felt intense regret.

She shouldn't have impulsively taken on this responsibility.

Originally, when she suggested to Zhang Yi that they bring the child along out of maternal compassion, she never imagined she would be the one responsible for childcare.

There's an old saying that fits perfectly:

Those with their hands in their pockets are always overconfident.

When you're not the one doing the work, it's easy to talk big.

Only when the task actually falls on your shoulders do you realize how difficult it truly is.

Zhu Yunque was at her wits' end when she suddenly caught a whiff of something sour and foul.

The child hadn't just wet himself - he had soiled himself too. Anyone who's cared for children knows how pungent their waste can be.

To make matters worse, the room was small and heated, making the smell even more intense.

The pampered Miss Zhu gagged and rushed outside, taking several deep breaths to recover.

Yet the crying continued unabated in the room.

The room wasn't far from Zhang Yi's, so the noise was clearly audible.

The thought of being mocked by others if she failed at childcare made Zhu Yunque stubbornly determined.

"I refuse to believe I can't take care of one child!"

Steeling herself, she abruptly pulled open the door and charged back in.

Changing diapers is an extremely challenging task, especially for beginners.

The cloth diapers the child used were called "jiezhi" in Huaxu Kingdom dialect.

They had no waterproof function whatsoever - just several layers of coarse fabric folded and stuffed under the child's bottom.

The moment Zhu Yunque touched them, she felt both her hands become wet.

She let out another loud shriek.

This time, she cried. She and the child were crying together.

Just changing a diaper made her feel utterly humiliated.

Meanwhile, Zhang Yi, listening to the commotion next door, was thoroughly amused.

Sitting elegantly on the sofa sipping milk tea, he said to Zhou Ke'er, "How long do you think it'll take her to finish changing that diaper?"

Zhou Ke'er tilted her head in thought before shaking it vigorously.

"I think she's in real trouble!"

She had seen friends care for children before, and it had once made her fear the idea of motherhood.

Those were no little angels - they were practically little demons capable of driving sane adults mad!

The moment you open a soiled diaper and see its contents can make you wish you were ascending to heaven.

Even Zhou Ke'er admitted she would need time to adjust to such tasks, and that was coming from someone with hospital experience and strong mental fortitude.

Zhang Yi shrugged. "Well then, let's wait and see! After all, she chose this herself. Idol!"

Old Zhu had said this trip was meant to broaden Zhu Yunque's horizons and show her the hardships of life outside.

Zhang Yi had been wondering how to make her understand clearly.

As it turned out, Zhu Yunque had volunteered for the perfect lesson.

When Zhang Yi saw Zhu Yunque holding the child earlier, he had nearly died laughing.

Zhang Yi had no intention of helping Zhu Yunque with her predicament. He had also instructed Zhou Ke'er and others on board not to assist her - the principle being that one should handle the responsibilities one takes on.

Instead, he left the cabin and went down to where the Rockflow Group members lived.

When he arrived, several people who had been whispering among themselves immediately fell silent upon seeing him, then greeted him with ingratiating smiles.

"Hello, Mr. Zhang!"

Zhang Yi asked, "Where's Li Zongyu? Have him come see me."

Someone immediately went to fetch Li Zongyu.

Soon, Li Zongyu came jogging to Zhang Yi.

"Mr. Zhang, you wanted to see me!"

Zhang Yi said, "Come with me. There's something I want to discuss with you."

"Of course."

Li Zongyu agreed without hesitation, smiling as he did so.

He had been prepared for this moment.

After all, the secret he guarded was precisely why the Jiangnan Region had sent people thousands of kilometers to rescue them.

Zhang Yi led Li Zongyu to the deck where they were completely alone.

Li Zongyu wore thick down jackets that could withstand temperatures below -20°C.

Leaning against the railing, Zhang Yi asked calmly, "Tell me about that stone."

Li Zongyu reached into his pocket and slowly produced a stone, presenting it to Zhang Yi.

It was a yellow stone resembling Tianhuang stone, appearing utterly ordinary at first glance.

But the moment Zhang Yi saw it, he felt his DNA stir.

Chapter 819: Elsewhere

All living beings possess instincts inherited from their ancestors.

These are imprinted in their very DNA.

The moment Zhang Yi saw that yellow stone, his genes seemed to leap with excitement, as if they had discovered something they desperately craved.

Could this be the Divine Source?

Zhang Yi glanced at Li Zongyu before calmly reaching out to take the stone.

He could sense traces of a peculiar energy within it, though only faint remnants remained.

"Where did you get this thing?"

Li Zongyu smiled. "I'm sorry, I can't tell you that yet. You'll have to guarantee the safe passage of me and my people first."

Zhang Yi smirked playfully. "Is that so?"

He held the stone up toward the pale white sun in the sky, but couldn't discern anything through it.

Zhang Yi thought to himself: Does this contain the secret to breaking genetic limitations?

"I'll be keeping this stone. Any objections?"

As he spoke, Zhang Yi pocketed the stone.

Li Zongyu nodded. "Of course."

Zhang Yi nodded back. "Good. You're dismissed. Go about your business."

Li Zongyu looked slightly surprised that Zhang Yi would let him go so easily.

From what he knew, Zhang Yi was a rather ruthless individual.

Li Zongyu had even prepared himself for interrogation, bribery attempts, or even physical violence.

Zhang Yi's casual attitude left him thoroughly confused.

What he didn't know was that his so-called secret held little appeal for Zhang Yi.

Zhang Yi was merely curious and asked casually.

As for whether this mysterious Divine Source truly existed or what it might be, Zhang Yi genuinely didn't care much.

He hated trouble.

Let the Jiangnan Region deal with troublesome matters.

"Maybe he's actually a decent person after all."

Li Zongyu shook his head. Though he still didn't fully understand Zhang Yi's character, Zhang Yi's actions had earned some goodwill from him.

The Golden Edge departed Rockflow Island's waters and headed into open sea, retracing its route back to Huaxu Kingdom.

The initial journey had taken over two months.

But with the route now familiar, the return trip would be significantly shorter, estimated at under fifty days.

By then, it would be around November.

Nearly a year had passed since the apocalypse began. Zhang Yi sometimes marveled at how time flew like a fleeting white horse - here one moment, gone the next.

Yet so much had happened during these months.

With increased passengers aboard the Golden Edge, daily management became necessary.

Old Tian oversaw these matters.

Living conditions on the ship were divided into four tiers.

Zhang Yi's meals weren't handled by the ship's kitchen - he had his own gourmet supplies.

The kitchen was responsible for feeding everyone from Zhu Yunque downward.

Zhu Yunque and the crew enjoyed abundant meals with no shortage of chicken, fish, meat or eggs.

The third tier consisted of Rockflow Group members, who still received some protein daily.

Though meat portions were small, they were available.

The fourth tier - later-screened Huaxu citizens and overseas compatriots - only got meat every three days.

Still, basic food needs were met for everyone.

Initially, no one complained about these living conditions.

Compared to Rockflow Island, their current provisions represented a massive improvement.

Though life in the cabins could be boring, at least they had food security.

But as the saying goes: some people shouldn't eat too well. Hunger brings one worry, but fullness brings countless troubles.

Soon enough, trouble arrived.

Zhu Yunque approached Zhang Yi, requesting private quarters for Su Nuanxi.

"She's my junior after all, and rather naive. I worry about her safety in those mixed-gender cabins."

"Besides, I could use help with the baby. Managing alone has been difficult."

Zhang Yi laughed at this.

"What, she could handle cave living but can't adjust to ship cabins now? Sounds like spoiled brat behavior to me!"

Zhu Yunque looked uncomfortable.

Truthfully, her request was self-motivated.

After just days with the infant, she was nearing her breaking point.

Yet per Zhang Yi's orders, no crew member would assist with childcare.

That's when her eager junior stepped forward to help.

After two lonely months at sea, Zhu Yunque desperately needed companionship.

She quickly came to regard Su Nuanxi as a confidante.

Seizing the opportunity, Su Nuanxi proposed moving to private quarters upstairs, which Zhu Yunque readily agreed to.

"It's just one room. It's not like we're short on space."

Pouting unhappily, Zhu Yunque complained to Zhang Yi: "No one will help me except her. Can't you make this one exception?"

Zhang Yi countered: "Plenty of women manage in shared cabins. Why does she need special treatment?"

"If she couldn't handle communal living, we should've left her on the island."

Stumped, Zhu Yunque could only look at Zhang Yi pleadingly.

"Zhang Yi... I'm begging you, okay? I really need the help."

Zhang Yi considered it. Their deck did have vacant rooms - giving one to Su Nuanxi wouldn't hurt.

At least it would stop Zhu Yunque's constant pestering.

Still, he disliked the woman's attitude.

"Our rooms are all occupied. But there is a storage room available."

Zhu Yunque gasped. "A storage room? Wouldn't that be filthy?"

Zhang Yi sneered. "She wants privacy over safety but complains about cleanliness? She can clean it herself if she's so particular. Take it or leave it!"

"Fine, fine! She'll take it!"

Zhu Yunque quickly agreed.

Without Su Nuanxi's help, she'd be lost with the baby.

With Zhang Yi's permission, Zhu Yunque went to fetch Su Nuanxi from the Rockflow Group area.

Hearing this, the other group members looked at Su Nuanxi with envy.

Some female members approached Zhu Yunque:

"Miss Zhu, could we apply for private rooms too? It's rather inconvenient for us girls sharing with so many people."

Once the precedent was set, demands multiplied.

Zhu Yunque looked helpless. "I'm afraid not. Su Nuanxi is helping me with Tommy."

"But we could help with childcare too!"

"Well... I don't need that many helpers."

Chapter 820: Causing Trouble

When Zhu Yunque opened this door for Su Nuanxi, the other members of the Rockflow Group immediately started getting restless.

Especially the women like Su Nuanxi, who all wanted to fight for a chance to live on the upper deck. Who didn't know the conditions there were much better than below?

But Zhu Yunque couldn't do this, because this ship belonged to Zhang Yi. Heaven knew how difficult it was for her to make requests to Zhang Yi.

When the group of women heard Zhu Yunque's refusal, their faces showed displeasure. Though they didn't dare get angry, they still complained.

"We're all women, why do you only take care of her? We're suffering too!"

"I saw there are still many empty rooms upstairs. What's wrong with letting us have some?"

"If you ask me, those crew members are all rough men. They should be the ones living below deck."

"That's right! When I was in university, the boys would always give us the better dorm rooms. These crew members really don't know how to respect women."

Zhu Yunque awkwardly smoothed her hair, unsure how to respond to these comments.

Seeing this, Su Nuanxi came over, linked arms with her and said to the others: "What are you all shouting about? Taking you away from that hellhole was already good enough, and now you're being picky?"

"Hmph, what's my relationship with Senior Sister compared to yours?"

She said smugly: "And let me tell you, even if Senior Sister didn't ask that Zhang guy, he'd have to obediently arrange a room for me. Do you know who my father and grandfather are?"

The women of the Rockflow Group looked unhappy but helpless, because Su Nuanxi's background truly wasn't ordinary - many in her family held important positions.

Su Nuanxi triumphantly pulled Zhu Yunque's hand. "Alice, let's go! Don't mind them!"

Su Nuanxi followed Zhu Yunque excitedly to the upper deck.

Zhu Yunque took out a key and brought her to the storage room.

When the door opened, they saw it was filled with mops, rags and large water pipes. There were even black diesel stains on the walls and the distinct smell of diesel in the air.

"This... Senior Sister, you must have the wrong room?"

Su Nuanxi smiled at Zhu Yunque, unable to believe this was the room arranged for her.

Zhu Yunque calmly said: "This is it. And I had to negotiate hard just to get this! Don't be so picky - it's still better than sleeping in the group bunk below, right?"

Su Nuanxi's mouth puckered like a duck's, looking utterly wronged.

"I thought you had real authority on this ship!"

Zhu Yunque began to feel uncomfortable all over.

"Ahem, of course I do! My status on the ship is about the same as Zhang Yi's. It's just that living conditions are limited right now. Getting you this room temporarily is already quite good."

"I got you a mattress and blankets. You can tidy it up yourself!"

"It may be simple, but with some cleaning it'll be quite nice."

After offering a few comforting words, Zhu Yunque mentioned her own needs: "First come help me take care of Tommy! He needs his diapers changed several times a day. I've already torn up several pieces of clothing and don't have enough now. Help me wash the used diapers." ραΝÓΒΕ\$

Though dissatisfied, Su Nuanxi agreed - it was still better than being crammed below deck with everyone else.

She followed Zhu Yunque to wash Tommy's diapers.

Earlier, to get Zhu Yunque to secure her a room, she had readily promised.

But she never expected the pile of used diapers would be like a small mountain, completely covered in baby waste.

"Urk..."

Su Nuanxi retched, but as part of the deal for her private room, she had to endure the disgust and hand-wash these diapers.

Soon it was lunchtime.

Three meals a day were prepared in the kitchen and distributed to each deck.

The food was quite simple - all pre-made dishes that just needed heating, served with rice.

This was also why Zhang Yi didn't eat with them.

Zhang Yi and Zhou Ke'er woke up late, so they combined breakfast and lunch.

During mealtime, Zhang Yi came out to stroll around and check on the ship's situation.

But in the dining area, an argument was happening.

Zhang Yi heard a woman crying and Zhu Yunque arguing unhappily.

He frowned, knowing these two women must be causing trouble again.

Besides them, no one else was allowed to eat on the upper deck.

When Zhang Yi went over, he saw Zhu Yunque and Su Nuanxi arguing with the cook, while Old Tian stood nearby looking helpless.

Zhu Yunque stared hard at the cook and demanded: "Why can't you prepare an extra portion for her? Mr. Zhang already agreed to let her stay on the upper deck. Making one more serving is no trouble at all!"

The cook spread his hands helplessly: "Miss Zhu, those who don't manage don't know the cost of firewood and rice! The captain allocated fixed rations - exact portions per person."

"The upper deck only gets seventeen portions. If we give Miss Su a portion, others will go hungry."

"Why don't you discuss this with the captain?"

Zhang Yi watched the scene with folded arms, already understanding the situation.

Those below deck ate communal meals.

Now that Su Nuanxi had come upstairs, of course she wouldn't want to eat that stuff anymore.

A playful smile appeared on Zhang Yi's lips as he watched without intervening.

But soon Zhu Yunque noticed him.

She stormed over and said to Zhang Yi: "Mr. Zhang, no matter what, I'm one of the leaders of this rescue mission. Don't I even have the authority to arrange meals for my assistant?"

(Like hell you do), Zhang Yi thought to himself.

He never liked this do-gooder Su Nuanxi to begin with.

But for such a trivial matter, he couldn't be bothered wasting energy. So he told the cook: "From now on, when delivering meals to the Rockflow Group, set hers aside first."

Unexpectedly, the cook spread his hands: "That's what I suggested, but Miss Su refused."

Zhang Yi was surprised now.

"You're still not satisfied?"

Su Nuanxi looked at Zhang Yi with teary, stubborn eyes: "I'm a young lady from an official's family after all. Why should I eat inferior food?"

"I want to eat the same as Senior Sister!"

It turned out when eating with Zhu Yunque, she noticed the huge gap in their meal standards and immediately protested.

Over such a minor issue, she made a scene in the kitchen, preventing the crew from eating.

A flash of impatience appeared in Zhang Yi's eyes.

He ignored Su Nuanxi and instead turned to Zhu Yunque.

"You're the one who brought her up here. How do you think we should handle this?"

Zhu Yunque frowned, sensing Zhang Yi's displeasure.

But this time, she wasn't planning to back down.

Because Su Nuanxi was her person. If she retreated now, what face would she have left?