



SYNOPSIS:

Wahaha, despite the interferences caused by the Lord of Life, we still managed to set out for the Northern Continent! ...Even though the mode of transportation is a little strange.

Shit, in a moment of carelessness, I was actually carried away by a phoenix! And this ordinary-looking phoenix is actually Scorching Flame, one of the Four Heavenly Kings?! *How am I supposed to escape from Scorching Flame's hold while we're high up in the air, without falling and dying a horrible death?*

Up against the seemingly undefeatable Four Heavenly Kings, Wicked and Gui both committed kamikaze. I could only watch on helplessly as they vanished before my very eyes...

I finally discovered the truth that Lolidragon had been hiding from me: *The Dictator of Life is in love with ME!* Faced with the Dictator of Life's deep feelings for me, I no longer knew if I should kill him or not...

The countdown to Second Life's destruction has begun!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Yu Wo:

Who am I? Sometimes I am like a warrior, wielding a sword on the battlefield with limitless passion and energy. At other times, I resemble a mage, with a mind devoted to research, completely absorbed in the things I like. Or I might be like a thief, leading a free and easy life, letting fate lead me to distant and unfamiliar lands. Occasionally, however I am similar to a priest, with a gentle heart, filled with compassion towards the living things of this world. Ultimately, I am a kindly Fantastical world.

Life, Fading Away

½ PRINCE VOL.7

Original novel in Chinese by: 御我 (Yu Wo)

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Chapter 1: Supreme Battleship

Gui's heart...

Without thinking, I immediately leapt toward Gui, but the hateful system was faster than I was. Gui faded into spots of white light before my very eyes, the wide smile on his face showing that he had died without regret... As for me, my whole body slammed heavily into the ground. I felt a powerful urge to cry...

Gui disappeared, Gui disappeared, Gui disappeared! Slowly, panic began to spread from the bottom of my heart. *Has Gui really disappeared? He won't appear again? Then, the Gui who is always grinning cheekily, always letting me beat him and scold him, and always standing behind my back supporting me silently, is gone?*

"Prince, why are you in a daze? Flowing Wind is still here," Lolidragon shouted in exasperation.

With tears welling up in my eyes, I hugged Lolidragon and said, "Lolidragon, Gui has disappeared. What should I do?"

Lolidragon, who was in my arms, suddenly stiffened. She grabbed my head with both arms and with a 'crack' sound, turned my head to face Flowing Wind... Ouch, I seemed to have lost a few hundred HP...

Lolidragon said syllable-by-syllable, "I said, Flowing Wind is still here. Do you not understand me?"

"I understand. I will avenge Gui." I looked at Flowing Wind with bloodshot eyes, "He made Gui disappear, so I will avenge Gui, even if it costs me my life!"

I felt a sharp pain in the back of my head and found myself lying face flat on the ground. Before I could figure out what was going on, I heard Lolidragon start to scold me vehemently. "You bastard! Did my words fall on deaf ears? I recently explained that HD is set up so that an NPC will disappear right after killing a player. Flowing Wind is still standing there, unharmed, yet you keep complaining about Gui disappearing! You didn't listen to what I said at all! Talking to you is a waste of my breath and less constructive than playing a piano to a cow¹."

I raised my head, eyes lighting up with joy. *So Gui hasn't disappeared? This won't do, I must confirm it.* I immediately opened the PM channel and asked hastily, "Gui, Gui, Gui! Are you there?"

¹ "...playing a piano for a cow.": A Chinese saying that means something is completely pointless. Cows can't appreciate music.

“I’m here! Prince, you should be wary of Flowing Wind. I am calling everybody to help out now.” Gui replied anxiously.

I felt utterly relieved when I heard him speak. *Great, Gui is still alive!*

“Prince! Are you even listening to me? Flowing Wind is still here! Are you planning to stay lying there on the ground and making it easier for him to kill you?” Lolidragon’s voice sounded like it was on the edge of hysteria, so I quickly jumped to my feet, drew Black Dao, and monitored Flowing Wind’s movements.

“Relax, the Dictator forbade us from killing you.” Flowing Wind said coldly, “If not, you would have already died a thousand times over.”

“Why did the Dictator forbid you guys from killing me?” Suddenly, I was very curious. Clay Child had also mentioned earlier that he would not kill me. Now that Flowing Wind was saying the same thing, I had a strange thought. *Does the Dictator of Life...not want to kill me? Also, I must be the only exception, as Flowing Wind murdered Gui without hesitation, but did not kill me, the person responsible for his anger.*

“I don’t know, but the Dictator’s orders are absolute,” Flowing Wind replied icily.

I tilted my head to one side and thought, *Err, the Dictator of Life forbade Flowing Wind from killing me, and Flowing Wind said that he cannot defy the Dictator’s orders, so this means that Flowing Wind will not kill me no matter what I do! I grinned evilly. Then, what am I hesitating for?*

“Your life is mine!” I drew Black Dao and charged toward Flowing Wind without a second thought. I immediately began slashing at him with the intent of teaching him a harsh lesson.

However, Flowing Wind dodged all of my attacks calmly and easily. He raised one brow questioningly and said, “You want to kill me?”

“What else could I be doing with a sword? Helping you to relieve an itch?” I shouted, but the Black Dao in my hands never stopped attacking. I slashed vertically and sliced horizontally, but not a single hit landed on Flowing Wind’s graceful body.

“Humans are really the epitome of conceit,” said Flowing Wind as he waved his hand with disdain.

On hearing this, I was so angry I nearly pulled out my blade and slashed at him... *Ugh, I think I’m already slashing at him.* But Flowing Wind was right. Alone, I couldn’t even scratch him. Suddenly, a thought occurred to me. *If I couldn’t even touch Flowing Wind, then what about the Dictator of Life?*

I shook my head forcefully. *I still have my companions! If everyone works together, we can definitely defeat the Dictator of Life!*

“Prince!”

I heard Gui’s voice behind me, along with the footsteps of many people. Without turning back to look, I already knew that Gui had ‘rounded up some people’ to help me.

Flowing Wind’s expression darkened as he said, “I almost forgot. Humans are also the perfect example of ‘tyranny by majority’.”

A little annoyed, I said, “Hey, remember that you are a BOSS. The mechanics of the game make it impossible for a player to solo a BOSS. This has nothing to do with being human or NPC!”

“Ah ah, starting to look for excuses already.” Flowing Wind made an expression that said ‘I knew this would happen.’

This person not only deserved a beating more than my brother and Lolidragon combined, he was as stubborn as Celestial. This made him extremely hard to handle. *Sigh, is the Dictator of Life letting all of his subordinates do whatever they want? First, Celestial refused to leave. Now, there’s Flowing Wind. Is he treating my Infinite City as a nursery?*

“Prince, let’s defeat him together.” Raging flames burned in Gui’s eyes.

Before I could even open my mouth to reply, Flowing Wind said, “Never mind me, you people are so weak you can’t even kill Celestial. Don’t worry though, I don’t plan to kill you. I came here to take care of the traitor, Celestial.”

“You want to kill Celestial?” A little confused, I asked, “Didn’t the Dictator of Life forbid you guys from killing each other?”

“He did forbid us from killing each other.” Flowing Wind smiled evilly and said, “But since Celestial betrayed us, he can no longer be considered one of ‘us’ anymore.”

That was simply illogical. Both Gui and I made a strange expression.

Flowing Wind’s face suddenly changed and he became more menacing. He growled threateningly and said coldly, “Where is Celestial? If you refuse to tell me, I will shower Infinite City with blood.”

When he finished speaking, the castle began to shake violently. Fierce winds howled, shattering all the windows around me. The wind was so strong I actually felt that I had to use all of my strength just to stand firmly.

Smack! Shocked, I looked behind me only to see Gui and many other citizens of Infinite City glued to the wall, desperately using their hands to block the wind that could be said to be as sharp as a blade.

He's gone too far! I roared angrily, "I don't know! Even if I knew, I would never tell you."

"What can't you tell Flowing Wind?"

I snorted coldly and said, "Celestial's whereabouts, of course..." *Eh? This voice sounds like...* I turned my head and my jaw nearly dropped. Celestial was standing at the door, frowning. He waved his hand and ribbons of Celestial Satin appeared in midair, blocking the wind in place of the shattered windows. Finally, the interior of the buildings returned to their windless state.

The moment Flowing Wind saw Celestial, he immediately roared angrily, "Traitor! You finally appeared. Watch me erase your existence on behalf of the Dictator..."

"Ah, Flowing Wind. Long time no see." Celestial walked towards Flowing Wind amicably, as if he had just met a good friend he hadn't seen in many years.

Flowing Wind tripped and nearly fell to the ground. He quickly steadied himself and laughed icily, "Raging Cyclone!"

The warning bells in my heart sounded, and I immediately dove toward the unprepared Celestial. As I pushed Celestial over, pillars of wind that were shaped like spiral drills bore a large hole at the place where Celestial had been standing, causing several explosions.

After I turned around and saw the large hole that let me look down from the third floor to the basement, I flew into a rage and shouted, "You've gone too far! Celestial is still one of you. Are you trying to kill him?" *More importantly, how much will it cost to repair such a large hole? Yu Lian-dàsǎo will definitely not forgive me!*

"You're right," Flowing Wind's face was clouded in shadow as he, who had not moved much previously, suddenly began to make a series of weird gestures. Surely, this was not going to be a normal attack!

"Quick! Everyone leave this place, now!" I hollered angrily. Everybody ran as fast as they could toward the doorway. Only Gui looked at me hesitantly, but after I gave him a flying kick, he too flew out the door. Under my intimidating gaze, he finally started to run for his life. As for Lolidragon... I didn't need to worry about her, since she was the first one to escape.

I looked toward Flowing Wind in time to see the strange sign he had formed and held with his hands. I also saw the smile of satisfaction on his face... *Oh no!* With Celestial carried over my shoulder, I headed for one of the broken windows and leapt outside. Although it was the third floor, I was very sure that Flowing Wind's attack was much scarier than jumping off a building.

While I was still in midair, I heard the horrifying sounds of an explosion accompanied by rocks flying everywhere from behind me. The game's gravity also unkindly started to make me fall downwards. *Oh great, maybe the rocks will conveniently bury me at the same time I fall to my death, so that a grave doesn't even need to be dug for me...* Helpless to do anything, I mocked myself.

However, I seem to have stopped falling in midair? Curious, I lifted my head only to meet Celestial's gaze, which was unusually calm and mature. *Was this really Celestial?* I felt the beginnings of suspicion. Suddenly, Celestial winked at me playfully and turned back into that confused Celestial whose mental age was comparable to a five year old's.

Celestial's body slowly floated upwards, followed closely by my body. *Hey, the feeling of floating in midair isn't so bad... Oh my god.* My eyes widened when I saw the castle. *My Infinite Castle... why is there only half of it left?!*

My face paled as I looked at the castle. Half of the Infinite Castle that everyone had put so much effort into building had become a pile of rubble. The design that Gui had taken great pains to come up with; Yu Lian-dàsǎo's desperate fundraising; everyone becoming unpaid construction workers; everybody feeling moved when the construction of the castle was finally completed... Everything was ruined!

I felt suddenly tranquil, and became so calm that there was not a single expression on my face. Perhaps this was because there was no expression that could express my current... anger!

"Flowing Wind, the Dictator will be angry with you." Celestial frowned at Flowing Wind.

Flowing Wind bellowed angrily, "I don't care, I've been displeased with you for a long time already. A traitor like you has no right to be one of our comrades. Your punishment from the Dictator is long overdue."

"The Dictator forbade us from killing each other, and also, we are not allowed to prevent Prince from going to the Northern Continent. You cannot disobey the Dictator's orders," Celestial shouted.

I froze for a long moment. *The Dictator forbade the Four Heavenly Kings from preventing me from going to the Northern Continent? But he dispatched so many NPCs*

with HD installed to threaten us into not going to the Northern Continent! What exactly is going on?

“I don’t care, I am going to destroy this damned place, exterminate you, and kill Prince!” Flowing Wind’s eyes radiated cruelty as he started making weird gestures again.

“Celestial! Hurry up and stop him.” I yelled, panicking. The destruction of the castle was causing me enough heartache. If Infinite City also vanished, how was I supposed to face everyone?

Celestial had already begun chanting a strange incantation, but suddenly, he stopped and looked blankly at the sky. I was so anxious, I grabbed Celestial’s shoulders and shook him vigorously.

“Dictator?” Celestial spat out in disbelief.

A look of slight alarm appeared on Flowing Wind’s face. Flustered, he followed Celestial’s gaze. What he saw made him sound like he was terrified to the extreme. He said, “How can this be? The Dictator cannot leave the Northern Continent.”

At this point, I also noticed that there was one extra person in the air. His blood red hair fluttered in the wind and his handsome face had an exotic magic tattoo. With the exception of the look in his eyes, which were not as filled with sorrow from a predetermined fate, he looked exactly the same as the photo Lolidragon had shown me.

“Flowing Wind, you disobeyed the Dictator’s orders,” The Dictator of Life said.

Err, why does this statement sound so awkward... Ah, right, who refers to himself in the third person? What’s going on? I was extremely confused.

Suspicious, Flowing Wind asked, “Who are you? You...are not the Dictator.”

“I am the Dictator’s clone.” The Dictator of Life...no, his clone explained, “The Dictator can find out the happenings of Second Life through me.

“Go back, Flowing Wind. The Dictator is very angry,” the Dictator of Life’s clone said expressionlessly.

“The Dictator is very angry?” Flowing Wind made a flustered expression and said, “Okay, okay, you tell the Dictator that I’ll go back immediately.”

Before he left, Flowing Wind threw Celestial a vicious glare, but Celestial smiled innocently and even waved to Flowing Wind in farewell. Flowing Wind was so pissed he nearly leapt toward Celestial, but in the end he simply glanced at the Dictator of Life’s clone and flew off in embarrassment.

“You are the Dictator of Life’s clone, right?” I coldly obstructed the Dictator of Life’s clone, who was about to leave. He stopped and looked at me expressionlessly, while I glared at him icily. I slowly raised my hand and curled up four of my fingers, leaving the index finger pointing straight out. I pointed at the wrecked Infinite Castle and said with absolute seriousness, “Pay up!”

“ ... ”

Agitated, I clenched my fists and yelled furiously, “What? Are you trying to avoid your debt? Do you know just how much money was spent building Infinite Castle?” I wasn’t kidding; if I didn’t collect the rebuilding funds, who knew if I could even reach the Northern Continent? I might be cut into pieces by the Finance Department and the Construction Department while still on the Central Continent.

After maaany seconds, the Dictator of Life’s clone was still motionless and there was no expression on his face at all. I couldn’t help but frown. *It’s not possible that this Dictator of Life, the god of Second Life’s...clone wants to evade the debt?*

The Dictator of Life’s clone remained silent, but he slowly raised his right hand and pointed toward the half-wrecked Infinite Castle. He muttered some incantations, and a miracle suddenly happened!

The rock debris actually moved! Dumbfounded, I watched as the rocks stuck together to automatically form a wall. The walls then tumbled around and joined to each other, forming rooms. Astonishingly, the wood chips also reformed themselves into chairs and tables before jumping into the rooms and arranging themselves.

Without much effort, Infinite Castle was restored to its former self, without even a hint of damage. I couldn’t help swallowing my saliva while imagining, “What a convenient ability. If I had this ability, I would never again have to worry about Yu Lian-dàsão swallowing me alive if I break something.”

“Is this acceptable? If there is nothing else, I shall take my leave,” the Dictator of Life’s clone said monotonously.

I immediately came back to my senses and hollered, “Wait a minute!”

“Is there something else?” The Dictator of Life’s clone was still annoyingly expressionless.

Curious, I asked, “You say the Dictator of Life can find out everything that’s going on through you?”

“My eyes are the Dictator of Life’s eyes.”

“Okay, look at me now. Remember to keep looking at me, and don’t turn your head away.” I adjusted my position and made sure I was right in front of the Dictator of Life’s clone. I pointed at the Dictator of Life’s clone haughtily and shouted arrogantly, “Dictator of Life, you just wait and see! I, the Blood Elf Prince, will definitely go to the Northern Continent and finish you off. So, you better clean your neck obediently and wait for me, got it?”

“Got it,” the Dictator of Life’s clone suddenly said softly, and the expression that flashed across his face for a moment... Was it gentleness?

Before I could respond, the Dictator of Life’s clone had already turned and flown away. As I watched him I... resented myself for being unable to fly... Wait, if the Dictator of Life flies like this when I go to kill him, how can I fly after him to chop him? I probably couldn’t ask Celestial to carry me into the air, could I?

Even if Meatbun had a bamboo helicopter² and could lift me into the air, I would have to cling to Meatbun with one hand. Could I kill the Dictator of Life with just one hand? I’m not Yang Guo from Return of the Condor Heroes, who became stronger after losing one arm!

“Prince, are you okay?” Gui asked, worried. He added, “We were crushed underneath the rocks, so we couldn’t help you. You aren’t hurt, are you?”

I tilted my head and answered irrelevantly, “Gui, is there a way for players to fly?”

“Fly?” Gui asked uncertainly. After that, his body shook violently for a moment and he said seriously, “You’re right, Prince. If we can’t fly, it would be impossible to defeat the Dictator of Life, who can. I must discuss this issue with Lolidragon.”

“Hmm, if I could fly...” I snorted coldly twice and said, “We’d see if that damned Fire Phoenix would still dare to abduct my Meatbun for a flight.”

“I can’t believe that the Dictator of Life actually created a clone that looks exactly like himself.” Lolidragon suddenly cut in and said, “This is troublesome. I guess it’s no longer possible to go to the Northern Continent secretly. Especially since a certain idiot just announced to the Dictator of Life that he was going to kill him.”

For a moment, I felt guilty, but then I remembered Gui saying that the Dictator of Life was omnipotent. In that case, shouldn’t he have found out that we were going to the Northern Continent a long time ago? Just as I was about to rebut Lolidragon’s stupid reasoning confidently, she started speaking before I could.

² **“Bamboo helicopter”**: The propeller-thing on Meatbun can be seen here: <http://images.wikia.com/halfprince/images/b/b4/Novel8-1-.jpg>

Giggling, Lolidragon said, “Prince, although there is still some time before we have to leave, do you want to see our means of transportation?”

My interest completely roused, I replied, “What are we using for transport?”

Lolidragon smiled mysteriously and left a statement, “Come with me.”

With enough curiosity to kill many cats, I followed her. Of course my attendant, Gui, tagged along. Lolidragon’s other attendant, my little brother Feng Wu Qing, also picked up his pace and went with us.

We walked quickly, and before we knew it we had reached the edge of the lake outside the city. Although ‘lake’ sounds like the kind of small pool where, for no reason, a beautiful lady was bathing and was then accidentally peeped on by the male main character, this place was different. This lake that is found north of Infinite City is really, really *big!*

I strained my eyes, but even so I could barely see the opposite shore, which was shrouded in mist. Also, I had to rotate my neck about two hundred and seventy degrees in order to see the left and right edges of the lake. All that being said, the most important thing was, I didn’t see anything besides a lot of water! Was our group going to swim to the Northern Continent? *Then should I buy a bikini-... er, swimming trunks?*

No, the really important thing was, if it were that easy to swim across the sea, who would want to pay that ridiculously expensive boat fee? Anyone who thought about it would know that it was impossible to swim there, unless Second Life had a mermaid race. Even if there was a mermaid race, would I have to be reborn and start from scratch as a mermaid?

I looked at the smooth surface of the lake, then looked at Gui and Wu Qing. Both of them also had curious expressions, so all three of us looked at Lolidragon – the only person who knew what was going on. *Just what kind of trick is she trying to pull?*

Lolidragon smiled her annoying ‘hee hee hee’ smile, turned to face the lake and shouted, “Supreme tri-functional sea, land, and air battleship – Activate, Challenger!”

What? Challenger, the supreme tri-functional sea, land, and air battleship? But... after thinking about it for some time, I asked, “Where have I heard the name ‘Challenger’ before?”

Gui replied weakly, “That was the name of the space shuttle that exploded on its maiden flight before it even left the Earth’s atmosphere³.”

What an extremely unlucky name! It’s as unlucky as naming a ship ‘Titanic.’ I sighed and was just about to discuss Lolidragon’s naming ability with her when the surface of the lake, which was originally as smooth as the surface of egg yolk, became covered in many ripples. A gigantic object then rose out of the lake, nearly burying me beneath the huge splash it created.

I stared incredulously at that gargantuan battleship that I thought I would only ever see in the pictures they showed us during military class. At the same time, I gulped and listened to Lolidragon’s triumphant explanation. She said, “The Challenger is five hundred meters long and two hundred meters wide; it can carry more than two thousand people. It has three forms: a submarine, a mobile land citadel, and a flying battleship. In terms of combat ability, the Challenger has one hundred laser cannons, three hundred machine guns, and one Super Nuclear Cannon of Utter Annihilation. It will definitely be very useful when we attack the Northern Continent.”

“Amazing!” I exclaimed. *This way, we won’t need to worry about being KO’d by NPCs before we even reach the Northern Continent.*

Just as Lolidragon was laughing evilly with the battleship as a backdrop, I suddenly noticed some strange large tentacles stretch out of the surface of the lake and wrap tightly around Challenger. Then, a massive octopus head appeared. My eyes widened as I witnessed the Challenger make a few snapping noises after being completely wrapped by the giant octopus and, like the so-called unsinkable Titanic that sank on its first cruise, the battleship broke into two pieces and slowly began to sink...

No, I sulked. At least the Titanic managed to set sail. Our Challenger has never even seen the ocean before...

“Lolidragon, the ship has sunk.” Feng Wu Qing pointed at the lake, hand trembling.

Lolidragon laughed derisively, “That’s not possible! The Challenger is a masterpiece made with utmost care...”

Probably because even Gui’s face didn’t look so good, Lolidragon turned around skeptically just in time to see the only remaining nuclear cannon above the lake’s surface. After one mighty pull by the giant octopus, the Challenger finally eloped with it, never to return...

³ “...the space shuttle that exploded on its maiden flight...”: This is an exaggeration by Yu Wo. The real Challenger exploded on its tenth mission. In her online version, Yu Wo also interchanges the name of the Challenger with Apollo 13. She changed all of the names to the Challenger in the print versions.

I looked at Lolidragon's petrified figure and slowly said, "I think we should take the flying carpet. Later, we will choose the members of the team. If we squeeze, eight people should be able to fit on the carpet.

"The six members of Odd Squad plus Sunshine and Kenshin already make up a total of eight people. As for the rest..." I frowned and looked at my little brother. *Will Wu Qing give up going to the Northern Continent?* I asked, "Wu Qing, do you want to go to the Northern Continent?"

Feng Wu Qing looked at me, opened his mouth, and was about to say something when all of a sudden, he froze with his eyes popping out of their sockets. Once again, he raised a trembling hand, pointed behind me and howled, "What a big clam..."

Clam? I was stunned for a moment. I looked behind me and indeed saw a large clam appear in front of my eyes. I secretly guessed, *Could this clam be the one I was acquainted with?*

Gui, who was standing beside me, calmly sized-up this large clam. Using my one hundred percent accurate sixth sense to make a guess, Gui's mind must be filled with the specialized knowledge of various creatures, earth science and so on that would allow him to investigate the evolution of this clam and figure out which kingdom, class, order and species⁴ this clam belonged to.

"Ah, Meatbun's master, I've finally found you." AnRui suddenly opened the two halves of his clam shell to reveal white, tender, and extremely delicious-looking clam meat. Of course, there were two large eyes growing on the meat.

Gui and Wu Qing froze when they heard the clam talk. However, I was not at all shocked. Instead, I raised my right hand, waved, and said, "Long time no see, AnRui."

I quickly fished Meatbun out of my bag so that he could reminisce on old times with AnRui.

"AnRuiRui!" The moment he saw AnRui, Meatbun, who had just come out of the bag, hopped excitedly to AnRui's side. He even leapt between the two halves of the clam shell and used AnRui's 'meat' as a trampoline.

My little brother beside me was howling in despair, "The clam actually talked. The clam actually..."

Gui also frowned and mumbled to himself, "Since when did clams have vocal chords?"

⁴ **The biological classification system:** Kingdom > Phylum > Class > Order > Family > Genus > Species

Ignoring the two who were close to having a nervous breakdown, I went ahead and asked AnRui, “AnRui, why did you suddenly come out? Didn’t you say that you didn’t want to come out?”

AnRui sighed softly, “Someone entrusted me with a task, so I had to come out.”

“Someone entrusted you with a task?” I didn’t quite understand what he meant, so I asked, “Who? What did he ask you to do?”

“I cannot say that person’s name, but he asked me to take all of you to the Northern Continent.”

I was stunned. *AnRui was going to take us to the Northern Continent? How? Would we have to sit inside AnRui? Although AnRui was rather big, that was in comparison to a normal clam. In reality, this clam was only a bit taller than a person. After considering its own meat, there was barely enough space left for me to squeeze in. How could it carry us to the Northern Continent?*

“AnRui?” Lolidragon, who had been petrified for a long time, suddenly shrieked, “Are you the sacred beast, AnRui?”

Before I could reply, Lolidragon had already rushed in front of AnRui and asked, “You’re really willing to take us there?”

AnRui’s clam shell wobbled. *That was probably a nod of its head*, I thought.

“That’s fantastic!” Lolidragon exclaimed excitedly, “We have the strongest battleship!”

“Lolidragon, even if the Challenger has been destroyed, you shouldn’t get so depressed.” I shook my head and said, “Isn’t asking a clam to become a battleship going too far?”

Lolidragon turned to face me, her face expressionless. With lightning speed, she pulled out a dagger and placed it against a certain fatal spot of mine. No, accurately speaking, it wouldn’t be fatal. It’d just hurt so much I’d wish I were dead.

I looked down at the spot that I didn’t really need, but also didn’t want to lose. My expression immediately changed and I said extremely seriously, “I believe that Lolidragon must have a profound reason for calling a clam a battleship. After some careful deliberation, I have realized that this is indeed a good idea. After all, nobody... not even an NPC, will think that assassins are hiding inside a clam!”

Lolidragon pursed her lips and finally withdrew her weapon. She then looked at AnRui like he was a Chanel bag and said, “It’s not a normal clam! It’s the bi-functional land and sea Supreme Clam Combat Submarine – AnRui!”

“I understand if it’s the sea, but I have to ask you a question.” Feng Wu Qing still hadn’t defrosted. He asked, “Have you ever seen a clam running on land?”

Lolidragon did not answer his question, and I also swallowed my own reply as we watched an enormous shadow swoop down on my brother. Wu Qing, who was suddenly eclipsed by an ominous shadow, had only just widened his eyes slightly when the owner of the shadow landed on top of him, bellowing angrily, “Are you discriminating against clams?”

Fresh blood stained the ground, accompanied by the sorrowful howl of a martyr. I looked away reluctantly and said, “Rest in peace, Wu Qing. I will definitely cook more clams for you as offerings.”

After bidding him farewell, I turned to face Lolidragon and said, “Stop keeping us in suspense and tell us how AnRui is supposed to take us to the Northern Continent.”

Lolidragon waved to AnRui and it finally left that unrecognizable heap of flesh and blood that was my brother. After retreating back into the lake, AnRui closed the two halves of its clam shell and slowly started to grow larger. There was a stupefied expression on my face as I watched AnRui grow so large it occupied one third of the lake. The current AnRui could fit not only me inside, but could easily carry a few hundred people.

I was beginning to understand how AnRui could take us to the Northern Continent. However, I never imagined that there would come a day when I was swallowed by a clam... No, not swallowed, but ‘put’ inside its stomach.

I can only hope that AnRui doesn’t reek of seafood...

Chapter 2: The Disappearance of Wicked

“This is AnRui,” I introduced to everyone in Infinite City. After seeing their dumbstruck expressions and increasing breathing difficulties, I added another fatal blow. “Is everyone ready? If so, take a seat. It’s time to depart.”

Everyone was speechless. After a lot of struggling, Nan Gong Zui finally managed to squeeze out a single question, one that he obviously already knew the answer to. “What are we sitting on?”

Naturally, I gestured toward AnRui. “You know, AnRui.”

“Where are we going to sit? On the shell?” Neurotic widened his eyes.

Silently, I walked up to AnRui’s side and patted its shell. At that, AnRui opened its shell and rolled me up with its tongue (don’t ask me if clams really have tongues. I don’t know either. I’ve never encountered tongues when I ate clams in the past. AnRui somehow just had one). I then lay on top of the soft clam meat, as comfortable as if I were lying on top of a water bed from Simmons. It was hard to suppress my continual feeling of drowsiness.

Soon, I felt another person being rolled in. When he was thrown on top of the clam meat, he caused a ripple of meat waves to spread out. Silently, he lay next to me.

“So dark. Is there a light around?” The person asked calmly, finally letting me know that the one who got rolled in was Nan Gong Zui.

I also calmly answered him, “Would there be light inside a clam’s body?”

Before Nan Gong Zui could even open his mouth to answer, a soft light suddenly lit up. Wordlessly, Nan Gong Zui and I looked up at the ceiling... I mean, at the center of the shell above us, where a pearl was now giving off light.

“How’s this?” AnRui asked attentively.

“Great, thank you very much,” Nan Gong Zui answered extremely politely.

Following that, the rest of the crowd was thrown in one after another. It wasn’t long before a bunch of people lay inside AnRui’s body in a disorderly manner.

I adjusted my reclining position before opening my mouth to speak. “I’ll take attendance. Wolf-dàgē? Yu Lian-dàsǎo?”

“Here.” Wolf-dàgē and Yu Lian-dàsǎo’s voices drifted over from the same corner. I turned my head to look, only to discover that Yu Lian-dàsǎo was in Wolf-dàgē’s embrace, a shy expression on her face... *ah, I saw nothing.* I turned my head back.

“Doll?” Right after I called out for her, two slaps resounded, accompanied by the sound of Celestial’s wailing sobs.

“Gui, Wicked?”

“Why are you grouping us together...” the two of them asked in unison, as if they were on the same wavelength.

“Lolidragon?” I yelled but didn’t get a response. “Lolidragon?”

I heard a snore, and then Feng Wu Qing coldly said, “She fell asleep.”

She fell asleep too quickly! Sweat... I continued with my roll call. “Fairsky, even though lying down presents a very convenient opportunity, don’t take this chance to devour Sunshine.”

“Eh, I... won’t do that... probably...” *Why does Fairsky’s voice sound a little guilty?*

“Kenshin?” I called out for Kenshin, seeing no need to call out for Cold Fox, since Cold Fox was always at Kenshin’s side.

“Here,” Kenshin called out simply.

“Neurotic, DanDan?”

“Ah, that pearl is so beautiful...”

“Before we get off the clam, can I take that pearl with me?”

Good, the wandering couple and Winter Triumph are all here. That only leaves...

“Uuuuu, Lolidragon, let me sleep by your side!”

Looks like everyone’s here... Inside my heart, I softly murmured, *thanks everyone*, before I yelled loudly, “Then let’s set out! AnRui, we’re counting on you.”

“Hey, hey, hey, did you forget about me?” A clear voice snarled out resentfully.

“Ming Huang...” I called out grudgingly. I didn’t think he’d come along too.

“Meatbun’s owner, I’m setting out now,” AnRui said courteously. After that, our journey to the Northern Continent began... *huh? You’re wondering how a clam can walk on land?*

By sliding! Don’t be suspicious, see, AnRui has already begun sliding. As a whole, the trip felt fairly smooth, except for when AnRui would occasionally turn left or dash right and we would tumble around inside. And when AnRui would suddenly brake, we would all splatter in front, although, the most painful experiences had to be when AnRui would jump up and we’d fly up high in the air, hit the ceiling, and then land on the clam meat below with a splat.

“Urgh, I’m clam sick,” Feng Wu Qing shouted in pain.

Weakly, I ordered, “Bear with it. It should be better when we reach the sea.”

I didn’t know how long it took, but AnRui suddenly jumped with a lot of power. We splattered against the ceiling for several seconds, after which AnRui finally landed with great strength, and we also struck against clam meat with great strength, which was followed by several groans.

I lay against the clam meat and howled in pain for several moments before I discovered that AnRui didn’t seem to be very stable and was wobbling left and right, like a ship floating in the sea. Happily, I shouted, “We’re at sea now!”

After I spoke everyone was so happy that they almost cried.

Compared to our previous hell of rolling about, it felt so comfortable at the moment that it was almost like we’d returned to sleeping in our mothers’ wombs. Everyone lay quietly on top of the clam meat, enjoying the peacefulness of the moment. After all, when we reached the Northern Continent, we would be fighting to the death. Who knew how many of us would survive against HD?

“Say, why don’t we decide on a time and location to meet in the real world?” I suddenly asked. If Prince were to disappear, then I would no longer have a need to hide my gender. I should be able to openly appear in front of everyone as a female. *Hehe, I wonder what kind of expression everyone will have when they discover my gender?*

“That is a good idea. Then we won’t lose contact,” Yu Lian-dàsǎo said with a chuckle.

“Then let’s meet at Yu Lian-dàsǎo and Wolf-dàgē’s wedding ceremony,” I said while smiling slyly.

“What are you saying, Prince?” Yu Lian-dàsǎo reprimanded faintly.

I couldn’t stop myself from laughing. Earning Yu Lian-dàsǎo’s “faint reprimand” was no easy feat.

“Where should we decide on?” Nan Gong Zui asked a little excitedly.

I gave him an odd look before I shrugged and said, “Wherever’s fine. It doesn’t matter even if we’re in different countries. Going places is so convenient now. If we use the transmission machine, we’d get there in no time.” (Note: The transmission machine’s function is similar to today’s fax machine, but what’s transmitted isn’t paper, but rather three-dimensional people or items. The transmission fee is not cheap.)

I chuckled twice before I said, “As for the fee for the transmission machine, of course we should leave it to Lolidragon, the daughter of the mighty president, to bear the burden.”

Lolidragon “hmped” twice before she private messaged me, “Fine, I’ll pay. I’m already itching to see how everyone will react once they know your true identity. Hehehe, they might even beat you until you swell up like a pig, especially Nan Gong Zui, Kong Kong, and all those people who look up to you. You know the consequences of shattering their delusions will be grave.”

Uh, Nan Gong Zui wouldn’t hit a woman, would he? Hopefully not...

“I wonder what Prince looks like? Probably not very similar to how he looks right now,” Wolf-dàgē’s rough voice resounded.

“There’s probably a huge discrepancy. Otherwise, how can it be that no one was able to track down the spokesperson for Second Life?” Winter Triumph murmured thoughtfully, scaring me so much that my heart suddenly jumped.

“Hehehe, even though appearances in Second Life are based on people’s true appearances, there’s still a lot you can alter, such as your body weight. Maybe the real Prince is as fat as a pig.” The guiltless tone Lolidragon faked made me so angry that my teeth hurt.

“Who’s as fat as a pig?!” I gritted out between my teeth.

“Huh? Am I wrong?” Lolidragon exaggerated her expression and even used an “innocent” (innocent my ass) tone to ask in return, “Otherwise, how do you look?”

“Your Highness, no matter what you look like, Gui will not care,” Gui hurriedly said.

I didn’t even have time to private message Lolidragon to scold her when something unexpected happened. AnRui, who had been smoothly sailing before, suddenly shook back and forth vigorously. I quickly yelled, “AnRui, has something happened?”

“There’s an obstruction,” AnRui replied tensely.

Feng Wu Qing's anguished wailings began again. "Ah, first it's land-sickness. Now it's sea-sickness."

Lolidragon angrily rebuked, "What a useless guy."

"AnRui, is there any way to pass?" I struggled to stand up.

"Yes, but it might be a little uncomfortable. Please take care, everyone. I will need to use my colliding technique to overcome the obstruction."

AnRui courteously apologized and then suddenly stood upright from its previous horizontal position. I didn't have any time to shout before I rolled straight to the bottom. I didn't know which unlucky guy got squashed firmly by me, but then I became the next unlucky guy when someone dropped from above and firmly squashed me. That person squashed me so much that my blood surged forward and I almost vomited a mouthful of blood.

"Prince, may I ask what kind of technique this colliding technique is?" From below me, Nan Gong Zui asked with a weak gasp.

"Rolling..." My face paled. *It can't be?*

"We're so dead!" Feng Wu Qing said hopelessly.

A few fleeting clouds floated above in the azure sky, white waves rolled in from the dark blue sea, and on top of the white, sandy shore lay... a clam huge enough to scare someone to death!

Without a sound, the two large pieces of the clam's shell opened and a hand (which was shaking slightly) reached out from inside. Then, a splattered human who resembled Sadako climbing out of a television set⁵, with messy hair splayed in front, crawled out on all four limbs, followed by a group of people wiggling out of the clam's shell, silently dropping dead on the seashore.

"If anyone ever tells me to ride a clam again, I will definitely kill eighteen generations of their family⁶." Feng Wu Qing, the first one to climb out, gritted his teeth and cursed

⁵ "...resembled Sadako climbing out of a television set...": Sadako is a character from *The Ring*, a horror novel that has been adapted to film. She is generally depicted as a gloomy young woman with her face hidden behind long hair, and she is often seen crawling out of television screens. She is part of the cursed video *Ring* that is said to kill viewers within seven days of watching it.

⁶ "...I will definitely kill eighteen generations of their family...": This is a common way of swearing that you'll eradicate the entire family, from the oldest generation to the newest generation, from great-grandfathers to infants. The eighteen generations part refers to nine generations of ancestors and nine generations of descendants.

dispiritedly, completely forgetting that the first person who told him to ride a clam coincidentally shared the same family members as him.

“Thank you, AnRui.” Because my feet were shaking, I could only hang halfway on top of the clam’s shell to give my thanks. Even though the journey hadn’t been very pleasant, at least we had safely arrived at the Northern Continent.

“You’re welcome, Meatbun’s owner.” AnRui nodded its head and then spat Meatbun out.

Meatbun cheered with “Oh oh!”, rolled several times in midair, and then landed on top of my head. Unable to contain its excitement, it told AnRui, “AnRuiRui~, roll-roll is so, so fun. We should play play it again next time.”

AnRui chuckled. “Okay, next time, I will play with Meatbun again.” After saying so, AnRui turned to me and even made a bow. “Everything now depends on you, Meatbun’s owner.”

I didn’t really understand, but I nodded and watched AnRui retreat back to the water, disappearing from sight after a splash.

Turning my head, I faced the crowd. “Alright. Where to now?”

“Flower City.” Gui took out a map and said, “Our current position is approximately south of Flower City. As long as we continue heading north, we should be able to reach Flower City within two days. Of course, this is under the assumption that no one blocks us.”

“Ah, then we probably won’t be able to reach the city in two days.” Feng Wu Qing stared at some place past my back, his eyes wide.

I turned my head to look and almost cried out when I saw what was practically a mountain and sea of NPCs. We were already completely surrounded by all kinds of NPCs. The only way out was the ocean behind us... No, I already heard the strange sound of the churning waves behind me. It looked like we were completely surrounded.

By this time, everyone had already pulled themselves up and gathered together, their weapons ready in their hands. I pulled out my Black Dao. After walking to the very front, I turned on the team channel for our Execution Squad. “Line up right now. We’re going to blast our way out. Undying Man, Kenshin, Cold Fox, Neurotic, Nan Gong Zui, Winter Triumph, all of you go to the front to open a path for us. Yu Lian-dàsǎo and Ming Huang, please also head to the front to help clear a path out using your magic. Everyone else, stay in the middle. Wu Qing, Wicked, come with me to the back.”

“Okay,” everyone responded simultaneously.

Everyone slowly lined up in the formation I had just described, and the NPCs looked like they wanted to start moving. I immediately yelled loudly over the team channel, “Break through the north!”

At once, Yu Lian-dàsǎo began reciting an incantation and Ming Huang was so excited that he’d already thrown out numerous strikes of lightning. He even began laughing loudly, “Haha, so many monsters. It’s been too long since I’ve had such a good time electrocuting things.”

As soon as the mages opened a path to the north, the warriors in the front began fighting their way out of the siege, and I concentrated on battling the NPCs that had caught up to us at the back of the group. After a flurry of movement, I slowly discovered the fact that, thankfully, even though these NPCs were numerous, they were not that strong.

While we did our utmost to attack and kill the NPCs, Yu Lian-dàsǎo and Ming Huang shouted at the same time, “Heaven’s Nine Wrath” and “Meteor Shower.”

The sight of meteorites and lightning striking together once again appeared in front of my eyes. I thought I remembered the first time I’d seen such an impressive sight, which happened to be during the final battle of the Adventurers’ Tournament. After the chaotic strikes of the meteorites and the lightning, a radius of more than ten meters in front of us was immediately wiped clean.

“Run quickly!” I shouted loudly.

As soon as I spoke, everyone began running desperately. As we ran, we even trampled on NPCs that were once again rising up. Ming Huang nearly lost his shoes too.

“Hurry and run, hurry! Warriors with quick agility, pick up the mages and run.” In the back, Wicked and I urged everyone on. I looked back and saw that numerous NPCs were already chasing us. My heart shivered. Although they weren’t strong, with enough of them, even ants could devour an elephant.

“This is no good, Prince.” Lolidragon looked like she was barging on with her teeth clenched as she spoke. “Prince, we should separate. You take the strongest ones – Kenshin, Sunshine, and Celestial – and fight straight to Flower City. Let us help you draw away the NPCs.”

“No,” I refused straight away. *What kind of joke is this? You want me to stay far away while I watch others get destroyed by NPCs without doing anything? I would rather you tell me to watch the entirety of Second Life get destroyed than that.*

Anxious, Lolidragon shouted, “Why are you so stubborn?”

I was just about to open my mouth to retort when I discovered a shadow looming above my head. I raised my head in confusion, but by then a phoenix had already grabbed me and lifted me off the ground.

“Prince!” Shocked, Wicked pounced and grabbed my legs tightly.

I quickly raised my Black Dao, wanting to cut the phoenix’s claws that were clutching my shoulders, but the phoenix seemed to know what I wanted to do next and even used its wings to swat my Black Dao away. When my Black Dao hit the ground, the phoenix shot straight up into the air. In a blink, I was already high up in the sky, getting farther and farther away from my companions.

“Prince!” I seemed to still be able to hear Lolidragon shouting and see everyone else’s shocked expressions.

What should I do now? I was completely at my wit’s end. Even if I could kill this phoenix, I was doomed to become mincemeat once I fell.

“Flying carpet, follow quickly.” A voice roused me with a start. I turned my head and saw that Sunshine was already making his way over on his flying carpet.

“Sunshine!” I yelled emotionally, at the same time struggling with all my might. Now I was no longer afraid of falling because Sunshine would never let me become mincemeat.

“Prince, hold on. I’m coming to save you right away.” Right after Sunshine shouted this, a shadow appeared in front of him, forcing him to suddenly brake. That shadow belonged to...Celestial! While Sunshine was being obstructed, the phoenix took me farther and farther away and kept going until I could no longer see them.

“Why?” My heart ached all of a sudden. *Is Celestial truly...a spy? He actually prevented Sunshine from rescuing me...*

“Uuuu, I’m now completely alone and even stuck in midair. What should I do?” I blinked my eyes, trying to force my tears back, but then again, since I was all alone, I might truly become mincemeat very soon. Even if I cried, no one would see me.

“Xiao Lan, help me up,” Wicked shouted with difficulty.

I looked down at my feet. Wicked... Zhuo-gēgē was slowly sliding down my legs. Hurriedly, I grabbed him and pulled him up to my side. Now, the two of us no longer dared to struggle. In fact, we grabbed on to the phoenix’s legs with all our might. Who knew how high up in the air we currently were? I only knew that we were surrounded by white clouds. If we were to fall, most likely no one would even be able to find our ashes.

“Who knew that we would make such a slip-up right after coming to shore?” Zhuo-gēgē said with a weak smile.

“Yeah,” I replied somewhat dejectedly. It looked like I was still too arrogant, thinking that I could plow straight through to the Dictator of Life, and then, like a hero, fight to the death and die together with the final boss... now I could only die together with a bird. Reality is truly cruel!

Indignantly, I accused, “Celestial really crossed the line! He actually blocked Sunshine, stopping him from rescuing me.”

However, Zhuo-gēgē thoughtfully questioned, “Celestial...maybe he is keeping something from us. He might not be as dumb as he appears.”

“He betrayed us!” I clenched my fists and bellowed.

“That might not be true.” Zhuo-gēgē fished out a compass and showed it to me. “Look. We’re heading north.”

North? Toward the location of Flower City? This bird isn’t going to take us to see the Dictator of Life, is it? Thinking this, I immediately opened my mouth to ask, “Hey, Bird, are you taking us to see the Dictator of Life?” Fire Phoenix was capable of speech, so there was no reason for the phoenix dispatched by the god of Second Life to be incapable of speech, right?

“I’m not Bird.” As I thought, the phoenix started speaking, using a stiff tone to spit out the words.

After going “eh,” I asked again, “Then Phoenix, are you taking us to see the Dictator of Life?”

“Hmph, who said I’m a phoenix?” The phoenix actually replied in a super affronted tone.

After hearing such a tone from the phoenix, I couldn’t help but coldly mock him, “Not a phoenix? Then are you a turkey⁷?” *Ah, shit, I almost forgot that my life is still in the hands of this phoenix. He’s not going to throw me down in a fit of rage, is he?*

“What’s a turkey?” the phoenix asked instead in a suspicious tone.

“Well...it’s a very majestic creature,” I answered in a calm voice. I mean, it is praiseworthy for turkeys to give themselves up so that people can eat them.

“I see. Do I truly resemble that kind of majestic creature?” The phoenix hummed joyfully and proudly.

⁷ “Not a phoenix? Then are you a turkey?”: In Chinese, turkey is literally “fire chicken.”

“Yes, very much,” I replied winningly, with a super flattering tone. Even Zhuo-gēgē was forced to smother his laughter.

“But I am also not a turkey.” Maybe it was because I had praised him for resembling a majestic creature, but the phoenix’s tone was clearly a lot more amiable now, although his haughty attitude hadn’t changed. Very conceitedly, he announced, “I am Scorching Flame, one of the Four Heavenly Kings who serve the Dictator of Life.”

What? This turkey is Scorching Flame, one of the Four Heavenly Kings? That’s really... he really didn’t seem like one of the Four Heavenly Kings at all. I furrowed my brows. No matter how I looked at him, he looked like a common turkey – ah, no, a phoenix.

Scorching Flame, who had been flying at a quick pace, suddenly braked and asked suspiciously, “Eh? Ocean’s Heart, what did you come here for?”

After hearing the words “Ocean’s Heart,” I also curiously looked toward the figure that was blocking our way. Ocean’s Heart was now the only one of the Four Heavenly Kings I hadn’t seen yet.

After a glance, I couldn’t stop myself from exclaiming, “Is the Dictator of Life too lazy, or is the author too lazy?” Why? Why did Ocean’s Heart...look almost exactly like Flowing Wind, with their only difference being that Flowing Wind gave people the feeling of a coming whirlwind, while Ocean’s Heart gave the feeling of flowing water?

“Hehe, Scorching Flame, you should hand the two of them over to me.” Ocean’s Heart gently said, “I will bring them to the Dictator of Life.”

“Why? The Dictator clearly told me to bring them over.” Scorching Flame looked not at all pleased about this.

“The Dictator has changed his mind; he was afraid that they would anger you and that you would forget your mission and instead kill them directly.” Ocean’s Heart wasn’t angry and merely recounted this indifferently.

“Hmph, I would never do that.” Extremely resentful, Scorching Flame said, “I will definitely complete the mission that the Dictator assigned to me.”

“Forget about that. Hand them over to me,” said Ocean’s Heart in a very gentle voice, though it had become slightly firmer.

“No, I will personally hand them over to the Dictator. I will complete my mission.” Stubbornly, Scorching Flame gripped the two of us tightly, and as spectators, Zhuo-gēgē and I continued to watch the two NPCs argue, since no matter who won, in the end we would be taken to see the Dictator of Life.

Hearing this, Ocean's Heart's face fell too, and he lightly said, "Scorching Flame, hand them over to me."

"I won't." Furious, Scorching Flame said, "The Dictator clearly wanted me to bring them over, not you."

Wow, is this what they call civil warfare? Hm, based on my knowledge from my many years of novel reading, right now we should provoke them to argue more. Even better, we should get them to start fighting, and then Zhuo-gēgē and I would be able to take advantage of the situation and escape.

"Aiya, Wicked, who do you think we should leave with?" I asked Wicked with a completely innocent expression, but my eyes were trained on Scorching Flame and Ocean's Heart.

After I blinked furiously, furiously being more than ten times per second, Zhuo-gēgē seemed to come to some sort of understanding. Tentatively, he tried asking, "Shouldn't we leave with the stronger one?"

"Hmph!" Scorching Flame made an emphasized "hmph" sound. Although Ocean's Heart still hadn't reacted, at least we'd already managed to provoke Scorching Flame's anger.

Once again, I "innocently" asked Scorching Flame, "Scorching Flame, between you and Ocean's Heart, who is stronger?"

"Of course I am stronger!" The flames around Scorching Flame's body suddenly began burning strongly, and his shape also began changing greatly...from the shape of a common turkey to something that looked no different from Ocean's Heart and Flowing Wind. The only difference was his red color.

Damn the author for being so lazy... As Zhuo-gēgē and I fell, we couldn't help but complain about this to ourselves... That's right, once the turkey changed into a semitransparent human, the bird feet that had been grabbing us disappeared right away, which meant we'd begun falling. Why was it that my plan to provoke civil warfare was kind of... backfiring?

"Oh no." Scorching Flame hurriedly rushed toward us but was blocked by Ocean's Heart, forcing him to watch us play at free-falling right before his eyes.

Uuuu. Fine, I'd accept that I didn't so much as see the boss's face, even though I was the hero setting out to destroy the boss. Fine, I'd accept that I got captured by the Four Heavenly Kings. But don't tell me that my death would actually come about because a momentary lapse in my enemy's rational thinking caused me to fall to my death? I wondered, would a lot of people laugh until they rolled on the ground after hearing about this?

“I’m sorry for dragging you into this, Zhuo-gēgē.” I looked at Zhuo-gēgē with a somewhat apologetic expression. It was all thanks to my bird-brained scheme that we’d need to report back to the Central Continent.

“It’s fine,” Zhuo-gēgē merely smiled kindly.

“I...” After only managing to say “I,” I discovered that we were no longer dropping, and that a strange feeling was coming from below, causing me to feel like I was floating on water. When I tilted my head to look down, I saw a jelly-like block of ice holding us up. *Water? Could it be Ocean’s Heart?*

“Let’s hurry. Also, the Dictator of Life is not in Flower City. You should head east of Flower City, to Mount HuaLian.” Ocean’s Heart’s voice sounded next to my ear. Surprised, I looked towards Zhuo-gēgē, who also looked like he had heard this, but he remained silent.

After finally reaching land, I spotted an unwelcome visitor in the distance. Flowing Wind was currently heading our way rapidly... Zhuo-gēgē and I alone were probably no match for him. We could only resort to the one stratagem I knew from the Thirty-Six Stratagems⁸ – run for your life!

Ocean’s Heart, who had blocked Scorching Flame, forged ahead and also blocked Flowing Wind at the same time. Even though I didn’t know why he was helping us so much, there was no way we would miss our chance to escape. Quickly, I pulled Zhuo-gēgē and began running wildly through the forest, doing my utmost to run toward the densest parts of the thicket to prevent the Four Heavenly Kings from catching us.

“Why is Ocean’s Heart helping us?” asked Zhuo-gēgē suspiciously as we ran.

“I don’t know either,” I replied, full of questions myself. Everything was getting more and more confusing.

“Where should we go now?” Zhuo-gēgē...*forget it, I’ll call him Wicked...* Wicked asked me, “Do you want to go to Flower City, or Mount HuaLian?”

I thought and thought. *Ocean’s Heart did save the two of us, so listening to him shouldn’t be wrong, right?* After thinking this through, I replied resolutely, “Let’s go to Mount HuaLian.”

⁸ **“Thirty-Six Stratagems”**: The Thirty-Six Stratagems is a collection of stratagems that has variably been attributed to Sun Tsu. The stratagems apply to politics, war, diplomacy, and espionage, often involving unorthodox or deceptive means. They are traditionally divided into six groups based on the situation in which they are best used. These categories include stratagems for winning, dealing with the enemy, attack, chaos, gaining ground, and desperation.

Wicked fell silent for a bit and then slowly said, “I feel that we shouldn’t trust Ocean’s Heart too much. Somehow, he seems a little strange.”

“But he did save us,” I refuted. “If he wanted to bring us harm, he could have just let us fall to our deaths, or he could have let Scorching Flame bring us to the Dictator of Life to let the Dictator finish us off. Wouldn’t that have been much easier?”

After hearing me say this, Wicked didn’t say anything more. After Wicked had revealed his misgivings, the two of us stopped within the thickets and examined our maps... Okay, I admit that it was Wicked who was examining his map. I made use of the time and took out some food from my bag...

“Prince, are the two of you alright?” Gui asked worriedly.

“Eh?” My mouth was full of food. I looked every which way. *Strange, Gui’s not around? Am I hearing things?*

“Prince, Prince?” Gui was so anxious that his voice was choked with sobs. Finally, he said hopelessly, “Oh no, Prince hasn’t answered. Has he returned to the Central Continent and rebirthed there, or even worse, could Prince have been...by HD...” After saying this, Gui could no longer continue on, leaving only the sound of spasmodic sobbing.

Lolidragon sighed. “Under those kinds of circumstances, even Prince probably has no way of surviving. Except, with his disappearance, Second Life will no longer have any hope.”

“Then what should we do...”

Hearing all this, Wicked glanced at me with an odd look and asked, “Don’t you plan on responding to them?”

I chewed on the food inside my mouth. After swallowing, I opened the team channel and energetically said, “Hi, everyone!”

“...”

“Hi my ass!” Lolidragon shouted in exasperation and frustration. “If you’re alive, why didn’t you respond?”

“You shouldn’t talk when you’re eating. That’s basic manners!” I answered with conviction.

“You...” After her anger dissipated, Lolidragon weakly asked, “Where are you?”

“Between a bunch of trees,” I replied honestly.

Lolidragon probably knew that she would get no answers from me, so she directly asked, “Wicked, where are you?”

“We are southeast of Flower City.” Wicked carefully scrutinized the map and said, “Trying to locate the direction toward Mount HuaLian.”

“Mount HuaLian?” Lolidragon asked, confused, as I watched Wicked busying himself with a drafting compass, a directional compass, and other such tools to confirm our bearings. Since he was so occupied, it was up to me to recount everything that had happened just now to Lolidragon.

After hearing everything, Lolidragon suspiciously asked, “Are you sure Ocean’s Heart can be trusted? What if this is a trap?”

I scratched my head. “What if it’s not?”

Lolidragon fell silent for a long time and then said, “Let’s divide into two groups. You and Wicked head to Flower City. We’ll head to Mount HuaLian and check it out.”

“Is Mount HuaLian more dangerous?” I only had to give it a little thought to figure out that Lolidragon must feel that Mount HuaLian was more dangerous, which was why she wanted me to go to Flower City.

“No matter what, I want you to go to Flower City,” Lolidragon said unyieldingly. “Stop being stubborn, Prince. And Wicked, take this guy to Flower City, even if you have to drag him there, dead or alive.”

After Wicked glanced at me, his gaze evidently moved from Mount HuaLian to Flower City on the map. I quickly stared at Wicked with an imploring expression, hoping he would move his gaze back to Mount HuaLian, but Wicked was Wicked after all, and merely said succinctly, “I will only take you to Flower City.”

As expected, there was no room for discussion. Even if I wanted to sneak off to Mount HuaLian, being such a klutz at directions, I think that the probability that I would successfully reach Mount HuaLian was as low as the probability that I could walk up to the Dictator of Life and slaughter him with one strike of my dao.

Speaking of my dao... I suddenly remembered my Black Dao! Reflexively, I reached for the area around my waist. Only the scabbard remained; Black Dao was long gone. I’d almost forgotten that I’d already lost it the moment I was taken away by Scorching Flame.

“Great, I don’t even have a weapon. Am I supposed to use my teeth to bite the Dictator of Life to death?” I was a little discouraged. Losing my Black Dao that had fought alongside

me from the start made it so that my odds of killing the Dictator were truly even lower than my odds of winning the lottery.

“Let’s go. I have a general idea of how to reach Flower City.” Wicked stood up and didn’t say much as he started forward.

“Oh.” It looked like besides following Wicked obediently, I didn’t have any other paths to take.

“Wicked, I lost my dao. What should I do if we meet enemies?” I asked worriedly as we walked. Even though my legs were fairly strong, I still didn’t want to use them to fight weapon-wielding NPCs.

“I will protect you,” said Wicked without even turning his head as he guided me out front.

Eh, as a girl, hearing a handsome guy say “I will protect you”... The normal response from a beautiful girl should probably be a delicate and embarrassed “I believe you.” But I clearly understood that the two of us were currently surrounded by enemies, isolated and without help. With just Wicked by himself, our odds of safely reaching Flower City could only be summed up by one phrase: Infinitely approaching zero!

That’s why I still wanted a weapon! I searched my bag inside out. Hahaha, this was great, other than this short dagger (Does everyone still remember? It’s the one that’s shorter than fifteen centimeters in total length), I didn’t have a single weapon. You couldn’t blame this on me. My Black Dao just had to be a growing-type weapon, so I never had to change my weapon whenever I leveled. Since I normally took on every challenge with a single weapon, there was no reason for me to have any extra weapons in my bag.

Just then, Wicked turned around, wordlessly handed me a sword, and somewhat awkwardly said, “Sorry, forget what I just said.”

“Haah.” Wicked turned his body but quietly sighed.

“Wicked.” I looked toward him with a lost expression.

“You don’t have to worry. My sighing doesn’t have much to do with you.” Wicked furrowed his brows deeply.

“Eh...”

“Really, it has nothing to do with you.” Wicked sighed again, and then he turned to continue leading the way. He looked like he didn’t want to say anything.

I, I only wanted to ask how this sword was supposed to be used... I've never used a sword before! Even though this sword looks unusually good, for a person who's never used a sword before, it's quite a waste... Come to think of it, why does this sword look so familiar?

“Wicked, isn't this the sword you're currently using?” No wonder it was so familiar. This was the sword Wicked always carried with him!

“Is that a problem?” Wicked turned around to ask, “Even though it can't compare to your Black Dao, this is the best sword I have.”

I laid my eyes on the sword Wicked had in his hands and saw that it was clearly far inferior to the one I had in my hands. I couldn't help but clear things up. “I only wanted a sword. I didn't say I wanted your best one. Besides, with me having your best sword, what about you?”

Wicked raised the sword in his hand. “I have this one.”

“But...” I still wanted to convince Wicked to give me the one in his hands, but he had already turned away once again and didn't even look back as he continued leading the way.

“I won't give you something inferior to use!” Wicked said abruptly after a moment.

All of a sudden, I felt like something was burning on my face. It felt... really strange.

“Found you.” A sudden gust of heat attacked, and following these words, an odd creature also appeared. It was a unicorn, a unicorn with a flaming mane.

“Wasting so much of my effort.” Under my shocked gaze, the unicorn suddenly became a red, transparent, humanoid figure. “Hurry and come with me to see the Dictator. Otherwise Ocean's Heart is going to catch up again.”

“Don't even think about it,” I began yelling, but Wicked suddenly covered my mouth.

Even though I was a little puzzled, I obediently shut my mouth and let Wicked speak. “Will you really bring us to see the Dictator of Life? You're not afraid that we'll assassinate him?”

It was like Scorching Flame had heard something akin to a joke. “Assassinate the Dictator? Hahaha, you're going to make me die of laughter. The two of you can't even touch a single finger of mine, yet you want to assassinate the Dictator? Even if the Dictator stood in front of you without moving, you wouldn't be able to kill him.”

“Xiao Lan.” Wicked suddenly private messaged me, “Listen to me. Later, when I start fighting with Scorching Flame, run away immediately. Go to Mount HuaLian to meet up with everyone else.”

“I refuse!” I left no room for argument. I would never abandon Wicked and run away by myself.

Wicked’s face fell and he used a grim tone to rebuke, “Stop playing around, Xiao Lan. If I die, the most that will happen is that I will return to the Central Continent to wait for everyone’s return, but if you die, our mission this time will be a complete failure. Are you going to betray everyone’s unreserved trust in you, their heartfelt feelings of deciding to follow you?”

“I would never abandon any of my comrades!” I yelled loudly. This was a principle of mine. No one could force me to violate it.

“Prince.” Wicked’s expression was extremely grudging, but his tone had softened.

“Let’s battle together, Wicked.” Without cowering, I stood next to Wicked.

Wicked sighed, but seeing that he couldn’t change my mind, he could only say, “Fine!”

“You want to fight me?” Scorching Flame asked impatiently. “You have no chance of winning. Why do something so pointless?”

I swung the sword in my hand a bit and calmly answered, “Sometimes, even when there are things you know you can’t accomplish, you still have to do it anyway.”

I locked my gaze on Scorching Flame’s figure as I private messaged Wicked, “Wicked, let’s attack from both sides.”

“Okay,” Wicked replied, and then he fiercely said, “Now’s the time!”

Hearing this, I immediately dashed forward. After Scorching Flame blanked out for a second, it raised both hands to quickly summon flames to deal with me, but I dodged past its body, sliding so that I was only three steps away from it. I held my spot without moving.

With Scorching Flame’s attention on me, Wicked also took the opportunity to begin his attack. Almost silently, he rushed forward, looking like he was about to dig out Scorching Flame’s heart, but he was still discovered. It dodged; Wicked only slashed through air.

As I was only three steps away, I immediately began the real attack. “Pure White Inferno Rhapsody!”

My sword successfully made contact with Scorching Flame's body. Just as I was celebrating, Scorching Flame angrily demanded, "Playing with fire against me? Hell's Infernal Flame!"

I helplessly watched as black flames scattered, swallowing my Pure White Inferno in a flash, and now the flames were pouncing my way. Feeling the deadly heat, I urgently backed up, my back violently ramming into a tree trunk. I breathed out, only able to watch as the black flames prepared to pounce on me.

"Scorching Flame, look this way!" Wicked didn't rush over to save me, but rather swung his blade at Scorching Flame, taking the opportunity to lure Scorching Flame's attention away.

Immediately, I stood up and attacked Scorching Flame in order to rid Wicked of his predicament.

"You have truly angered me!" yelled Scorching Flame with clenched teeth, suddenly starting to form strange hand signs with both of its hands.

"Wicked, let's attack together. Don't let it finish those hand signs!" I yelled with great alarm. I wasn't going to forget that Flowing Wind had the strength to destroy Infinite City. I had the feeling that if I let Scorching Flame complete its hand signs, I was probably going to have to report back to the Central Continent.

As I yelled this, the sword in my hand did not remain idle. I hacked at Scorching Flame without any flashiness... but suddenly, flames erupted from the ground. With Scorching Flame at the epicenter, the ground began splitting open in a snowflake pattern, with surges of flames spilling out from the cracks.

"We can't stop this anymore. Prince, run quickly!" On the other side, Wicked yelled at me urgently.

I broke into a run, but the cracks on the ground did their utmost to split toward me, and the heat of the flames felt like it was burning the back of my neck. I didn't even have any time to look back at the state of affairs behind me, and could only hear how the earth sounded like it was almost howling with grief.

An explosion that pierced the sky sounded. I was almost blown away by the ensuing forceful wind that was accompanied by intense flames. Forcefully, I slammed into a tree trunk, the tree splintering before I even had any time to spit a mouthful of blood, and then I was flung out once more by another strong gust of wind and flames.

Before my eyes was darkness, and it felt like a thousand pounds were weighing me down. I moved to touch that weight... Wait, don't tell me that I was going to meet my end because I got crushed by a tree? Think about it, when someone asks, did you die from

confronting the final boss? From confronting the Four Heavenly Kings? Not really, I was blown away by the wind, and then I got squashed by a tree... *Uuuu, that's so embarrassing.*

“Prince...” A beam of light and an anxious voice drifted over.

“Wicked!” I yelled happily but doing so caused the wound on my chest to throb with pain. My face immediately lost color.

Pained, Wicked gazed at me and used his gentlest tone to say, “Don’t worry, I’m going to save you right away.”

I watched Wicked’s figure as he did his utmost to push the branches away, suddenly discovering that his body was speckled with blood stains, and his facial color was not any better than mine, yet he continued to risk himself in trying to save me. Even though each time he used his strength led his face to become even paler, even though his blood dripped in red petals...

“Wicked... Zhuo-gēgē.” It felt like something warm flowed through the bottom of my heart. With my heart throbbing, I gazed at Zhuo-gēgē.

After clearing the branches, Zhuo-gēgē very very gently pulled me out. Supporting me, he took out a red potion and slowly poured it into my mouth, and he used a gentle voice to say, “I’m going to use an ultimate technique I’ve never used before. Try not to stand too close, okay?”

“You don’t need me to help you?” I hurriedly got out of Zhuo-gēgē’s embrace, alarmed as I spoke, “Scorching Flame is too strong. I’m afraid you won’t have time to use your ultimate technique.”

Zhuo-gēgē smiled a small smile. “It won’t happen. Once I use my ultimate technique it cannot be stopped, and it does not distinguish between friend and foe. I’m afraid I will hurt you, so you should keep your distance.”

“Oh.” I scratched my head. *I think I’ve once again become a burden.* That kind of feeling was really unbearable.

“Good, back up slowly.” After Wicked calmly finished saying this, I followed what he said.

As I watched Wicked’s back that left no room for surrender, each step bringing him closer to Scorching Flame, I suddenly had a bad premonition. My backward steps came to a stop for a second, but after I thought it through, I decided that I did not want to become anyone’s burden, so I continued backing up slowly.

“Thinking of running?” Scorching Flame yelled.

“Your opponent is me,” came Wicked’s voice from behind as well. Gripping my weapon, I worried, not knowing if Wicked’s ultimate technique would be effective... *weapon!* Wicked’s best sword was still in my hands. That horrid sword in his hands would never be enough to engage Scorching Flame in a fight.

Realizing this, I immediately turned, wanting to toss the sword in my hand to Wicked, but instead I saw Wicked walk slowly toward Scorching Flame with absolutely no weapon in his hands. Just as I started puzzling over this, Wicked softly uttered the following words: “ND self-destruct program activate!”

ND...self-destruct program? Could it be that Wicked installed ND on his body? And what is a self-destruct program?

I didn’t need an answer. The sight before my eyes already told me what the ND self-destruct program was. Suddenly, piercing white light burst out of Wicked’s body. I refused to blink as I faced the white light and at last I faintly saw Wicked’s loving smile toward me, and it seemed like he was saying: “I don’t ever want to see you hurt again...”

An explosion! Before my eyes, Wicked and Scorching Flame exploded at the same time. I lost all my strength, falling to my knees as I faced the results of the explosion: white snowflakes drifting in the sky and not a single person standing in the center of the explosion.

“Zhuo-gēgē?” I asked softly, but there was no one to answer me. I almost sobbed as I violently continued, “Zhuo-gēgē? Where are you? Don’t scare me! Or have you already gone back to the Central Continent?”

ND...the purpose of ND is to die together with the NPCs. Lolidragon’s voice just had to come to mind without any tact.

“Wicked...have you disappeared forever?” Vacantly, I reached out with my hand to catch one of the white snowflakes, gentle and soft to the touch. It was like seeing Zhuo-gēgē’s loving and pampering smile.

Chapter 3: Gui's Kindness

I didn't know how long I had been kneeling in that same spot, with nothing but a feeling of absolute emptiness in my heart. I should have known. *What sort of ultimate technique could Wicked possibly have to defend with, alone, when facing Scorching Flame of the Four Heavenly Kings? There had to have been some trick for him to have made such a decision!*

It was simply too late when I finally realized this. Wicked had already disappeared from Second Life, along with Scorching Flame. The only thing I could do now was to take revenge for him by killing the real instigator behind all of this: the Dictator of Life!

I wiped away my tears and stood up. What I had to do right now was to go to Mount HuaLian and meet up with the others. *But...* I looked to my left and right, and then back again. *Why does this forest look all the same to me? Which way am I supposed to go? This...* even more than Wicked's self-destruction, this was the one thing that made me feel weak in the legs... *I really hope that I can get to Mount HuaLian by myself!*

I had no choice but to consult with Lolidragon first. I opened the PM channel and asked, "Lolidragon?"

"What? What's wrong? Don't tell me you guys have already reached Flower City, you can't be that fast?" Lolidragon asked dubiously.

I was just about to open my mouth and explain my present predicament, when I was suddenly struck by a thought. *Besides Lolidragon, there is virtually no one else who could have set up that ploy with Wicked and the ND self-destruct program. Then, doesn't that mean everyone has the ND self-destruct program installed inside them?*

The reason they did it was to help me eradicate all the enemies that blocked our way to the Dictator of Life! Furthermore, they didn't tell me precisely because they knew that I would definitely be opposed to it.

If I reached the Dictator of Life together with them, wouldn't that mean I would have to look on helplessly as the others lay down their lives to blow themselves up along with the enemy? By the time I reached this realization, my face had already turned very pale. I definitely do not want to see anyone else turn into snowflakes.

"Prince? Did something happen?" Lolidragon kept calling my name, as though she had discovered that something was amiss.

However, I didn't reply, and simply closed the PM channel without a word. I looked at the surrounding forest and murmured to myself, saying, "If I climb to the top of a tree, I should be able to see where Flower City is, right?"

As I predicted, once I had busily scampered up to the treetop like a monkey, I spotted a very large city with a spire in the middle, on the very top of which was even a sculpture of an extremely large rose... Sure enough, it was Flower City!

After making certain that I would be going in the right direction, I slid down the tree trunk, and I began to advance toward Flower City one step at a time. *Although it is a bit lonely traveling by myself, it is still better than watching the others blow themselves up.*

“Haven’t you forgotten something very important?” a voice couldn’t resist reminding me.

“What important thing?” *Was there such a thing?* I cocked my head and thought hard.

“If the Dictator of Life really were at Mount HuaLian and not Flower City, wouldn’t that mean your companions are headed directly for certain death?”

“Oh yeah!” I had almost forgotten, Ocean’s Heart had said that the Dictator of Life was at Mount HuaLian... *Wait a second, who’s talking to me?*

I turned my head... and behind me stood XiMen Feng, who was even making a “victory” sign with both hands!

“I can’t believe it—Wicked’s death must have come as such a great shock to me that I’m actually hallucinating and just imagined that I saw XiMen Feng.” Amazed, I shook my head, and looked back again. Yet, the victory sign-posing XiMen Feng was still standing there.

“What? Wicked’s already gone back to the Central Continent?” shouted out a gloating XiMen Feng. “Yer daddy was right. Without yer daddy, you, sonny, would definitely go down in utter defeat.”

I pointed a shaking finger at XiMen Feng. “H-how come you’re here?”

“What’s that supposed to mean? Yer daddy also wants to kill the Dictator of Life.” XiMen Feng complained resentfully, “Who knew that all of you guys would move so fast? By the time yer daddy hurried back to Infinite City, there wasn’t a single person left.”

Hurried back to Infinite City? XiMen Feng can’t possibly mean that after being blown sky-high by AnRui, he had only just hurried back to Infinite City, right? Are you serious? I thought with disbelief. *Just how far did you fly off to?*

“Haha, just as yer daddy was hoppin’ up and down in rage by the sea, that damn clam came back,” XiMen Feng said with a smug expression on his face. “Of course yer daddy ordered him to take yer daddy to the Northern Continent. You were kiddin’ yerself if you

thought that yer daddy would let you youngsters do somethin' as grand as killin' the final boss, then take all the glory for yerselves!"

"..." I was left at a loss for words.

"But yer daddy hadn't even come ashore when yer daddy saw a horde of monsters, forcin' yer daddy to sneak up through the forest." XiMen Feng heaved a sigh while shaking his head. "Yer daddy ended up not knowin' where the heck he was. If yer daddy hadn't heard the gang makin' a riot over the team channel, yer daddy would've thought that you were all long dead!"

I had stopped paying attention to XiMen Feng's babbling nonsense and was in the middle of pondering where I should go next. *To Flower City? Or Mount HuaLian?*

I didn't know if XiMen Feng had detected my unpleasant mood, as he actually shut up and stopped with the "yer daddy this, sonny that." But he immediately spoke again, "Sonny, it seems like the gang is plannin' to come lookin' fer you!"

"Looking for me?" I asked, greatly startled.

"Yeah. You closed the team channel, so they're worried out of their wits and saying they're going to come find you," XiMen Feng answered, looking as though he was listening intently to something.

I also immediately opened the team channel to find out what was going on.

"Something must have happened to Wicked. Otherwise he wouldn't have stopped responding to us," Lolidragon said worriedly.

"Don't worry, Ming Huang has already gone offline to ask," Wolf-dàgē responded calmly.

After a long while, Ming Huang's voice could be heard. He sounded very heartbroken, and while suppressing his emotions with great difficulty, he said, "My brother's character disappeared. He used the ND self-destruct program on himself against Scorching Flame of the Four Heavenly Kings and turned them both into ashes."

Everyone fell silent. Finally, Lolidragon spoke up, "Since Wicked has disappeared, that guy Prince doesn't have anyone taking care of him! And now he absolutely refuses to answer, so who knows what he's thinking? We'd better go and find him first!"

Upon hearing this, I closed the team channel again. Since now I knew that they were coming to Flower City to find me, I no longer had to worry about them meeting the Dictator of Life at Mount HuaLian. *Alright then, I'll set off to find the Dictator first, and hopefully I'll be able to take care of him before everyone arrives at Flower City.*

“Alright, to Flower City!” I decided.

“Alrighty, yer daddy will go with you to kill the final boss!” XiMen Feng shouted excitedly, a glint of anticipation in his eyes.

I hesitated a bit. “You... don’t have the ND self-destruct program installed on you, do you?”

“Huh? Indie cell-distract probe fan?” XiMen Feng repeated with a baffled expression on his face. “What’s that? How come yer daddy’s never heard of it before?”

“...Pretend I never asked.” Three dark lines descended down my face. *I should’ve known that XiMen Feng hasn’t ever grasped the present situation.*

“Let’s go.” I immediately started walking toward Flower City.

“Prin—Sonny! You’re walking in the wrong direction,” XiMen Feng yelled hurriedly.

Eh? Is that so? I scratched my face as I was dragged along by XiMen Feng. *Weird, why does it seem like XiMen Feng is acting a bit pushier than usual today?*

“XiMen Feng, after AnRui brought you here, did he leave again?” I asked absentmindedly. *Darn that clam... would it have killed him to stay and help out?*

“Uh-huh, yeah.”

“Since AnRui hates getting involved so much, I wonder who was actually able to make him come and act as our transport.” No matter how much I racked my brains, I still couldn’t figure out just who would be able to force that clam off its bum.

“It could be the Dictator of Life himself,” XiMen Feng said solemnly. “Even though I don’t know the reason, it’s clear that the Dictator of Life is helping us reach the Northern Continent. Yet on the other hand, he’s also trying to prevent us from advancing. I really don’t understand what his true intention is.”

“Is it really the Dictator of Life?” I really didn’t understand the mentality of a final boss. *He wants us to come, but at the same time he is desperately trying to stop us. What’s he playing at?*

“I think it should have been him,” replied XiMen Feng, his brow also furrowed in thought.

I suddenly felt very strange, as if something were out of place... *Just what could it be?* I stared at XiMen Feng’s furrowed brow, feeling rather strange... *Oh yeah!* I shouted in surprise, “XiMen Feng, you—”

XiMen Feng's body suddenly stiffened. "What's wrong with yer daddy?"

I bore down mercilessly upon him. "You're just as directionally challenged as I am! Acting all like you know where you're going... If you're really able to lead me to Flower City, then I bet I can swim back to the Central Continent on my own."

"Th—this is..." stammered a wide-eyed XiMen Feng, looking as though he was at a loss for words.

"Luckily, I'll be able to see if I climb a tree." Immediately I nimbly climbed up to the top of the tree. XiMen Feng, the bastard, was even more directionally challenged than I was after all! We had been walking in precisely the direction leading *away* from Flower City.

Once again I slid down the tree trunk, and waved to XiMen Feng. "It's this way."

XiMen Feng remained rooted to the spot, staring stupidly at me.

Seeing him like that, I curled my lip irritably. "What? You don't want to come with me? Then you can go find the others by yourself."

"I'll come with you, no matter where you want to go," XiMen Feng said with a smile, and followed me.

Something still feels weird. Isn't XiMen Feng acting... rather differently than usual? I thought hard. How is XiMen Feng different from before? He seems to be... gentler? I shook my head violently. It is inconceivable that the word "gentle" can actually be used in conjunction with XiMen Feng. I am definitely imagining things!

When the city walls of Flower City were already within sight, I found myself faced with a predicament. *How should I sneak into Flower City?* Considering that there were probably some hundreds of thousands of NPCs crawling all over the place, I really didn't feel that with just XiMen Feng's help I could simply disregard the mobs of enemies and charge our way through to the Dictator of Life.

"If the Dictator of Life really were in Flower City, then he would definitely be in the Central Tower," XiMen Feng shrewdly analyzed. "That is where the defense would be the strongest."

"The Central Tower!" Inwardly, I sized up our present situation. *How could I possibly get to the Central Tower? Unless you were an NPC, any player that entered Flower City would definitely be slaughtered... Right, an NPC!* I hurriedly asked, "Is there any way the two of us can disguise ourselves as NPCs?"

"Um, generally speaking, it's not possible," XiMen Feng said with some hesitation.

“Then, that means there is a way?” From the way he spoke, it sounded like XiMen Feng had some sort of idea.

In a rather defeated tone, XiMen Feng replied, “Yes, a while ago Lolidragon happened to develop a device that can be used to change one’s appearance.”

“Then what are you waiting for? Hurry up and take it out,” I demanded rather unhappily. If XiMen Feng had taken out this device earlier, I wouldn’t have had to stand here racking my brains for a way to get into Flower City.

XiMen Feng pulled out of his bag a strangely shaped... plastic wrap!

Plastic wrap, as the name implies, is a clear plastic film used to preserve things. When bought, it often comes in a cylindrical shape, and upon opening it, one can pull out a very long sheet of clear, plastic film that can be used to wrap up food, which can then be placed in the refrigerator, preserved, and thus keep any foul smells from spreading. Moreover, it can be used to steam nice tasty eggs. In short, for a housewife and her cooking needs, it is an indispensable treasure... But, I seemed to remember that what I wanted was a disguising device. *What is XiMen Feng giving me this plastic wrap for?!*

With flames practically shooting out of my mouth, I reached out with both hands and closed them around XiMen Feng’s throat. Here we were, facing an extremely serious situation, yet this guy still had the nerve to play around with me!

“Wrap this around your body, and then say the name of the person whose appearance you want to take!” XiMen Feng frantically yelled, as he could do little else in the face of my wrath.

“Oh.” I immediately withdrew my hands from XiMen Feng’s neck, took the plastic wrap, and hastily began to “preserve” myself... I felt like a mummy being wrapped in transparent bandages.

I finally understood what it felt like to be a fish wrapped in plastic wrap. My entire body, including my eyes, was wrapped in the plastic wrap. Besides standing, I couldn’t do anything at all... although I could probably still jump straight up.

“Prince, just say the name of the person whose appearance you want to take,” XiMen Feng reminded me.

“...Scorching Flame.” I considered for a moment. *If I want to get close to the Dictator of Life, it would definitely be best to turn into one of the Four Heavenly Kings. Furthermore, Scorching Flame has already disappeared along with Wicked, so I won’t have to worry about running into him.*

The name had barely left my mouth when the film on my body suddenly began to tighten... Alright, I admit that Scorching Flame was a lot slimmer than me, but there wasn't any need for it to be this tight. Moreover, my body felt so hot, it was as if I were being roasted over a fire. I couldn't keep myself from moaning in pain. *My god, not only am I being tightly wrapped in plastic film, now it feels as though I'm stuck inside a microwave.*

Can it be that XiMen Feng is an NPC in disguise, and is planning to devour me after putting me in the microwave? Wild thoughts swirled uncontrollably through my mind right before I passed out from the heat.

Ow, where am I? I can't be inside the fake XiMen Feng's stomach, can I? I shook my head vigorously, trying to get rid of the feeling of dizziness.

"Sorry, I forgot to tell you that the transformation process isn't very pleasant," said XiMen Feng... No, this wasn't XiMen Feng's voice. I whipped my head up to look, only to see someone that I shouldn't be seeing here.

Celestial!

I stared blankly at him. *The Execution Squad can't have found me this quickly...right?*

Celestial smiled. "I'm not actually Celestial. You turned into Scorching Flame, so of course I will need to turn into another NPC as well. We can just say that Scorching Flame has caught the traitor Celestial, and is bringing him back to report to the Dictator of Life."

"That's a good idea." I got up, and happened to notice that my own hand had turned into some red, semi-transparent foreign-looking entity. I looked down at the rest of my body, which was half translucent. It made me feel like a... ghost.

"Let's go!" I gathered my courage and, dragging the "traitor" Celestial who had been captured by "Scorching Flame," I headed toward the main gates of Flower City.

I walked straight into the city. As expected, the number of NPCs inside was as innumerable as the players within Infinite City. Moreover, they were crawling all over the place. If I had brazenly charged in, I probably would have had to prepare to go back to the Central Continent after breaching just a meter past the city gates.

But right now I was Scorching Flame... Hehe, as expected, not a single NPC stood in my way. Dragging "Celestial" along like so, I steadily approached the Central Tower, drawing ever closer to my target: the Dictator of Life.

“Stop right there!” A cold voice suddenly rang out. What was even more frightening was that I seemed to have heard this voice before.

Taking a deep breath, I turned to face this newcomer, who turned out to be none other than Flowing Wind. I coolly asked, “What do you want?” In any case, right now I, like Flowing Wind, was one of the Four Heavenly Kings, so there was no need to be courteous with him. Besides, based on the short time I had known Scorching Flame, I had the feeling that he definitely had not been a person of good temperament.

“You caught Celestial?” Flowing Wind asked with a surprised expression on his face.

“Yeah, and I was just about to bring him to see the Dictator,” I replied.

“Why don’t you just fly? What are you walking on your legs for?” Flowing Wind asked suspiciously.

Ugh, although this technique of disguise can transform me into another person, it can’t give me that person’s abilities... but I couldn’t very well say that. I thought about it, and came up with a forced excuse. “Hehe, I wanted to take my time beating this guy up. If I flew to the Dictator right away, where’s the fun in that?”

Flowing Wind laughed raucously. “But of course, let me teach him a lesson too.” Having said this, he actually threw a punch at XiMen Feng, knocking him onto the ground.

Seeing that Flowing Wind was aiming to land a few more blows on XiMen Feng, I hurriedly blocked him. “Alright, that’s enough. Better not let the Dictator find out.”

“Alright.” Upon hearing the Dictator’s name, Flowing Wind had no choice but to stop, albeit very reluctantly.

I quickly helped XiMen Feng up, and threw him a worried glance, which he returned with a reassuring smile.

“Flowing Wind, something serious has happened!” a child’s voice urgently shouted. “Scorching Flame is dead and the Dictator of Life has flown into a rage.”

“What? Scorching Flame is dead?” A strange expression appeared on Flowing Wind’s face. He stared at Clay Child, and then looked at me.

I’m so dead. I was just about to break into a run and flee, when the whole sky shook with a terrible voice that was filled with rage and grief, wailing, “Why did they kill him?” “Scorching Flame didn’t do anything wrong!” “Damn all of you humans!”

“The Dictator of Life!” I looked toward the Central Tower. The Dictator of Life was in Flower City after all—Ocean’s Heart had given us false information.

“Hurry, run to the Central Tower,” XiMen Feng reminded me.

He was right. Right now we were up against two of the Heavenly Kings. If now wasn't the time to flee, I didn't know when would be. I immediately broke out running at top speed, but still remembered to shout at XiMen Feng, “Don't follow me, XiMen! Run toward the city gates, I'll lure them to the Central Tower—XiMen Feng?”

Shocked, I watched as XiMen Feng spread out both arms to block the path of Flowing Wind and Clay Child. He lightly uttered the very words that I never, ever wanted to hear again in my life, “ND self-des—”

Not waiting for him to finish, I struck out with my foot, kicking XiMen Feng down onto the ground so that he was unable to get up. I viciously growled, “Do you take me for an idiot?”

I stomped, kicked and punched him. “Did you think I couldn't tell that you were different from the usual XiMen Feng? How could XiMen Feng be as clever, as gentle, and as big of an idiot as you, who thinks only of sacrificing yourself for me?”

I kept hitting him, but couldn't keep myself from choking on my tears as I cried out, “Stupid Gui!”

XiMen Feng...no, Gui stiffened, then raised his head and gave a wry smile. “You found out?”

“I wasn't sure at first, but when you shouted to activate the self-destruct program—how could I not have known?” I shouted, “You purposely walked in the direction opposite of Flower City in order to lead me to the others, right? I refused to follow you, and yet you said that you were definitely willing to stay with me. Who else could you be besides Gui?”

“I'm sorry, Prince. I didn't mean to lie to you, it's just that when I saw Wicked blow himself up, I knew you definitely wouldn't let me come with you, so I...” Gui slowly got up, and gently held me in his arms.

So you pretended to be XiMen Feng, and even as you were about to blow yourself to pieces, you refused to tell me you were Gui... I also embraced him back tightly and cried bitterly, “Wicked, Wicked's already gone! Don't leave me too, alright?”

“Please don't cry, Prince. If you cry, both Wicked and I will feel very sad,” Gui gently comforted me.

“Then you have to promise me that you definitely will not use the ND self-destruct program,” I said, looking straight at Gui, not wanting to give him any chance of evading me.

Gui smiled, but did not say a word.

“Gui?” I asked, a bit afraid. Gui’s smile was so gentle... so gentle, that it made me feel afraid.

“Chains of Love,” Gui softly recited.

My heart jumped, and looking down, I saw that semi-transparent chains were twisting themselves around my body... Gui was going to blow himself up! Panicking, I yelled, “Gui, I forbid you from disappearing! If you disappear, I definitely, definitely won’t go looking for you!”

The back of Gui’s body stiffened, though he calmly faced Flowing Wind and Clay Child, and asked, “Can you let us go?”

“Is Scorching Flame really dead?” Flowing Wind demanded, holding back his temper with tremendous difficulty as the air surrounding him began to churn in turbulent gusts. Anyone could see that Flowing Wind would fly into a rage at the slightest sign of assent from Gui.

“Yes,” Gui answered serenely.

“You guys killed him!” Clay Child looked angrily at Gui with red-rimmed eyes, while Flowing Wind fixed a hateful glare on me.

Gui turned to me with a bitter smile. “It looks like there won’t be a happy ending, Prince. You and Wicked couldn’t kill Scorching Flame... With the two of us against Flowing Wind and Clay Child, do we have any other choice?”

“We can escape,” I said, trembling as I struggled. *Why are these bonds so damn tight?*

“Don’t struggle anymore, Prince. Those chains are like my love for you... they will never, ever let go.” As Gui’s smile became even more tender, it made my heart ache even more painfully.

“No!” I couldn’t stop myself from screaming. “Gui!”

“ND self-destruct program activate!” Gui softly called out.

A flash of blinding white light burst forth, and sounding as though he were about to cry, he gently said, “I still want to meet you, Prince.”

Bang! The ear-splitting sound of a violent explosion tore through the air, followed once again by those exceedingly beautiful white snowflakes falling from the sky. Was this Gui’s blood, Gui’s flesh, or Gui’s heart? I couldn’t hold back the tears that filled my

eyes. In my heart, all that remained was the image of a dark-haired demon with amethyst eyes, a man who always left his smiles for me, but kept his tears to himself.

“Gui... why did you sacrifice yourself?” I cried out. “I came to Flower City on my own because I didn’t want to see any of you die for me! Yet you still gave up your life, what the hell is up with that?”

“Gui, you idiot! Idiot!” I yelled hoarsely.

Chapter 4: Celestial's Fury

“Scorching Flame?”

I had no idea how long I was just standing there staring when an anxious voice suddenly echoed out. I tentatively looked to where the voice had come from, and my eyes fell upon Celestial... *Celestial?* I half-crawled, half-rushed to him, hugging him as I asked, “Gui, you’re not dead?”

“Gui?” Celestial answered, bewildered, “What are you saying? Scorching Flame?”

I stiffened. This wasn’t Gui. This was the real Celestial. Hoarsely, I asked, “Are you really Celestial?”

Celestial blanked out for quite some time, and replied with a strange tone, “Of course I’m Celestial.”

Gui really has disappeared. I squatted on the floor again, and said bitterly, “I am not Scorching Flame. I am Prince.”

“Prince?” Celestial asked in bewilderment as he examined me. “You really are Prince!”

“Then what are you still doing here?” Celestial suddenly jumped up. “This is the Northern Continent. If all Four Heavenly Kings arrive, I wouldn’t be able to protect you by myself.”

I laughed dryly, “The Four Heavenly Kings? There is only one Heavenly King now.”

Celestial was startled, as if struck by lightning. “What do you mean?”

I clenched my fists, and said the words that broke my heart, “Wicked and Scorching Flame have perished together, and Gui has just disappeared along with Clay Child and Flowing Wind.”

“You-you killed them?!” Celestial shouted in disbelief as he trembled.

I blanked out. “*We*” killed “*them*?” Does he mean that Gui and Wicked killed Scorching Flame, Flowing Wind and Clay Child⁹? I tilted my head up and looked at Celestial, whose face was filled with sorrow and fury.

“Didn’t they hate you?” I couldn’t stop myself and asked, “Why are you so worried about them?”

⁹ “**Clay Child**”: In online text of the series, Prince uses Celestial’s name here, which is a mistake. This was fixed in the print version.

“They were only children.” Celestial roared. “They were only children who didn’t know any better. They never caused much harm, so why did you, why……” At this point, Celestial broke down in tears and couldn’t speak anymore.

My heart burned with anger. “Had they not captured me, Wicked and Gui would also not have had to perish with them, and anyway, it’s not just them who disappeared. Wicked and Gui have also disappeared.”

Celestial suddenly gripped my collar, eyes turned bloodshot in his grief. “Don’t you dare compare Wicked and Gui to them; you know that you all still have a life in the real world, unlike us. Once we die, we have nothing left. Don’t tell me you don’t understand this?”

I stared... It was true, at least in the real world, they still existed as Zhuo-gēgē and Professor Min Gui Wen, but Scorching Flame, Flowing Wind and Clay Child on the other hand had nothing left. Just as I would feel upset over Wicked and Gui, naturally Celestial would also be furious over his fellow self-aware NPCs.

“I’m sorry!” I apologized in a tight voice. I never thought I would be the cause of Celestial’s bad mood.

“Sorry? Do you think the lives of three of my companions are worth just one apology? Hahaha, that is such a fair exchange, truly it is!” Celestial laughed madly, the corner of his eyes filling with tears.

“Human!” Celestial swiveled his head around. Besides directing his vengeful gaze on me, he stepped closer and closer to me...

“You are all too selfish. Just like the Dictator said, to you, we are all just a bunch of numbers. We will never be valued as another life.”

“But we also have feelings: we feel sad, we feel pain, and we feel love!” When he said love, Celestial’s face softened.

“Even though Scorching Flame and Flowing Wind didn’t like me, they never attacked me.” Celestial’s face held a sorrowful look. “The Dictator and I are the same; we don’t want to lose what few companions we have.”

“But in one short day, I lost three of my companions, and the one who brought their murderers to the Northern Continent was me,” Celestial roared.

Celestial has gone mad and he really will kill me, I realized as I stared at his bloodshot eyes filled with vengeance. I suddenly became fully aware of the fact that Celestial really hated me right now. I stepped back, yet I couldn’t think of a way to escape.

Thunder sounded... *Really, thunder on a sunny day?* I tilted my head to face the heavens. *Can it really be that "He"¹⁰ also thought that we had been too outrageous in our deeds?*

"Ah..." A faint sigh echoed around Flower City. "Celestial, come back, I don't want to lose you again."

Celestial blinked and swiveled his head toward the tower with a large rose, eyes filled with regret and hurt, and then Celestial looked passionately at me and said, "I will take you to see the Dictator and let him decide everything."

"See the Dictator?" I stood up quickly. *Could it be that Celestial wants to help the Dictator exterminate me?*

"Yes, no matter what has happened, I finally managed to get you here to Flower City... I sacrificed three companions for this; of course I will bring you to see the Dictator." The look on Celestial's face... Maybe I was reading his face wrong, but to me he had a look of triumph that said that his plan had finally succeeded.

"Celestial, you couldn't have been sent by the Dictator?"...*A spy?* After all, Celestial now wore an extremely serious and sorrowful look on his face. It was completely different from the silly, naïve personality that I had become used to, and I really couldn't shake off my doubts that the Celestial before had only pretended to be silly and naïve.

Celestial was silent, before finally saying, "Yes, the Dictator sent me. Even the Four Heavenly Kings didn't know about this."

"You lied to Doll?" My face darkened. Doll had already started to accept Celestial. If she found out that Celestial had been lying to her all along, she would definitely be upset.

"I never!" Celestial roared, "My wife is my wife, the orders that the Dictator gave are the orders that the Dictator gave! These two things have nothing to do with each other!"

"You're still a spy anyway," I roared back.

Celestial's face reddened. He walked in circles, furious but unable to refute me. He finally sucked in a deep breath, turned to me and said, "No matter what has happened, you have to follow me to see the Dictator."

What a joke. If I were under attack by both Celestial and the Dictator, escape would be impossible, never mind being able to kill the Dictator. I slowly backed away, prepared to run at any given moment.

"Let's go, Prince. The Dictator will decide everything." Celestial rubbed away the tears at the corner of his eyes and steeled himself.

¹⁰ "He": The "He" here refers to God.

“There’s no...” I swallowed. If I fought against Celestial, the chances of me winning would be... less than zero. If I just focused on escaping, what would my chances be?

“Celestial, if I fought against you, what are the chances of me escaping successfully?” I couldn’t help myself and asked aloud... Then I thought, if someone asked their enemy when they were about to fight against them what the chances of successfully escaping were... Wasn’t that a blatant declaration to the enemy that they wanted to run? I had just done something stupid again.

Celestial, however, seriously considered this and answered me, “Approximately... less than ten percent. After all, I can fly and you only have two legs to run with.”

“But if there were someone standing in your way?”

“That... That would depend on how powerful the person was.” Celestial answered again, but I blinked. *I haven’t even opened my mouth to ask?*

“Someone around the same level as you.” Ocean’s Heart suddenly descended from the sky between me and Celestial.

“Ocean... You’re still alive?” Celestial let loose a relieved sigh, but couldn’t help the anxious expression that came across his face. “The only one left out of the Four Heavenly Kings is you.”

Ocean’s Heart smiled, swiveled his head to me and said, “Ah, you can’t beat the Dictator of Life. No matter what, you will never be able to defeat him, so I purposely led you to Mount HuaLian... I didn’t think that you would head to Flower City to see the Dictator on your own.”

I was stunned. *I couldn’t beat the Dictator... That’s why Ocean’s Heart purposely led me to Mount HuaLian? Ocean’s Heart had been preventing me from running to my death at Flower City?*

“Hurry up and leave. I will help you block Celestial,” Ocean’s Heart pressed.

I won’t go. If I go, wouldn’t Wicked and Gui’s death be for naught? I switch to the PM channel and calmly asked the others, “Where are all of you? Can you immediately head to Flower City?”

“There’s still a fair distance.” Lolidragon hastily asked, “Did anything happen? Has Gui found you yet?”

“Gui...” I started choking again.

“Did something happen to Gui?” Wolf-dàgē was surprised, but a moment later heavily said, “No matter what has happened, Prince, come over and join us. Believe me; all our power together will definitely be stronger than yours alone.”

“That’s right, Prince, don’t act on your own again.” Yu Lian-dàsǎo also spoke up with worry, “Everyone is worried about you!”

I stared at Ocean’s Heart’s battle with Celestial, and thought over Wolf-dàgē’s words. *It’s true; it’s better to return to everyone now.* I suddenly had a fleeting desire to be by my comrades’ side, to battle together with everyone... fighting until we reach the Dictator of Life!

“Okay.” I made up my mind. “Wolf-dàgē, wait for me. I will go now and look for you.”

I immediately ran out of the city gates; Ocean’s Heart would help me by distracting Celestial. Not to mention, I now had Scorching Flame’s appearance, so the other NPCs wouldn’t attack me in this form. *If I don’t run now, when will I get the chance again?*

“Prince, wait...” Celestial’s surprised voice echoed out. “Celestial Satin!”

The minute the words were uttered, countless white, silken strips surrounded and attacked me. I ducked and dodged desperately, but the silken strips proved too much for me. The strips bound me tightly, and rendered futile my attempts at running away. Covered with a transparent membrane, I really felt like I was completely wrapped in white cloth, like an actual mummy.

“Feathers of Ice!” Ocean’s Heart raged, and the silken strips became embedded with small feather-shaped crystals. The silken strips binding me were torn apart.

“Ocean’s Heart, you...” Celestial was surprised at Ocean’s Heart’s actions, and then explained, “I am only bringing him to see the Dictator; I have no intention of harming him.”

Celestial stopped short, and asked curiously, “Yet you, who has never cared about anything... Why are you preventing me from capturing Prince?”

Ocean’s Heart gave a small smile. “That’s because I’m siding with the humans!”

I tilted my head up and stared at Ocean’s Heart. *It’s siding with us?*

“What are you waiting for, Prince? Hurry up and leave.” Ocean’s Heart lightly chastised me.

Startled, I immediately continued my unfinished task – escaping.

“Ocean, this is too much! I must bring Prince to the Dictator!” Celestial roared.

“Hmph, let’s see you try.” Ocean’s Heart’s tone of voice turned cold and stern.

“Celestial Satin!”

“Feathers of Ice!”

“Stop!” A thunderous roar sounded again.

The roar made the earth shake terrifyingly. The buildings beside the street groaned, and a few wooden structures even crumbled to the ground. *If measured on the Richter scale, this earthquake would be rated at a 7.0...* I swallowed and looked at the wooden house a mere few steps from me. No, it could not be called a house anymore. It was now just a pile of logs.

“I warned you, never attack your comrades!”

“Dictator!” Celestial looked toward the Central Tower with panic. His face held both remorse and obedience. “I’m sorry. I should not have forgotten your orders, but I wanted to bring Prince to see you.”

“I do not want to see him right now!”

“Dictator?” Celestial asked in surprise.

“I don’t want to see him. All I want to do now is kill him. Flowing Wind, Clay Child, Scorching Flame...”

Hearing this, Celestial turned to me and said, “Hurry up and leave. You can’t meet the Dictator right now.”

What sort of situation is this? Didn’t the Dictator want to kill me? Why is Celestial telling me to hurry up and leave? I couldn’t stop myself and asked, “Don’t you all want to kill me?”

“Leave when I tell you to! If you still continue asking so many questions, I really will capture you and hand you over to be killed by the Dictator myself!” Celestial half-heartedly threatened me, using Celestial Satin to surround me.

“Wait a minute, I...” I still wanted to continue asking, but dozens of Celestial Satin ribbons started forcefully pushing me out of Flower City, and the enormous city gate behind my back sealed itself, leaving me standing there alone outside the city to be chilled by the wind.

“Ah!” I shrieked, then moaned, “I forgot to ask Celestial to take me to look for the Execution Squad. My god, I will get lost!”

The sounds of multiple people tripping and falling seemed to come from behind the gates!

Chapter 5: If There is Already French Bread in This World, Why is There Meatbun as Well?

“Hmm... I remember that when Gui tried to take me to find everyone, he seemed to be going... this way?” I stared at the deep and quiet forest, thinking in desperation, *Which direction did Gui take me in...? Speaking of which, if only Gui were still here, then everything would be fine. Even Zhuo-gēgē’s presence would help...* Inadvertently, my heart sank. *I will never be able to see them within the game again.*

“Then... won’t I have to meet Professor Min Gui Wen now?” I frantically stood up. *Oh no! I don’t think my midterm exam results on the history of literature were that... ideal.* Thinking about the Professor’s comment on my test that said “there is still a lot of room for improvement” made me really... not want to tell him that I was actually Prince...

But if I don’t go to meet Gui, won’t that be quite cruel of me? I sighed with an inevitable headache, “What should I do?”

“What should you do? Open the door and let us in! Or else, be prepared to be destroyed!” A cold voice rang out.

I froze for a moment. This voice sounded very familiar, but that person usually didn’t use such a cold tone when speaking to me. I raised my head and looked up. I stood up, excitedly shouting, “Zui! And everyone!”

The entire Execution Squad had actually assembled right in front of my eyes! Everyone appeared tired and worn out, their foreheads dripping with sweat, their faces full of exhaustion. It could be deduced from one look that they had risked their lives to come here in a rush... *Did they rush here in desperation for an idiot like me?* I almost smiled happily from the bottom of my heart.

However, it seemed that Nan Gong Zui hadn’t expected that I would yell out his name. He stood there stunned for quite a while before replying, “Who are you? How do you know my name?”

“Don’t tell me you’re Prince?” Lolidragon rushed forward, studying my appearance from head to toe. “How did you become a ghost? And a red malicious ghost at that!”

“Lolidragon! Be careful! It might be a trap!” Undying Man charged forward a few steps, standing in between Lolidragon and me. He was playing the part of a hero that always protects the beautiful girls. Looking at me with suspicion and doubt, he bluntly said, “No matter how much you look at this thing, it does not resemble Prince one bit!”

Oh no... They can’t recognize me. Don’t tell me they’ll treat me as an NPC and kill me? I hurriedly tried to clear up the misunderstanding, “I am Prince! I really am! I just used the

device that Lolidragon gave Gui! Lolidragon, you know... that plastic wrap that lets you transform..?”

“Plastic wrap?” A puzzled expression appeared on Lolidragon’s face. Her strange reaction led to the Execution Squad anxiously drawing out their weapons and pointing them toward me one after another.

“Pffft!” Lolidragon couldn’t help but snicker out loud. It wasn’t long before she held her stomach in laughter. “Hahahaha! Plastic wrap! You actually called the fake skin we invented for transformations plastic wrap! Haha, only, only Prince would have such a weird imagination!”

“So it really is Prince?” Yu Lian-dàsǎo gasped in surprise.

“It is me!” I nodded in desperation.

“Wow, Prince... You have turned... really red!” Sunshine stared at me with curiosity.

...*That’s not the main point*, everyone thought.

After hearing these “comments,” Lolidragon knelt on the floor, violently pounding the ground as she laughed in an even more exaggerated manner. The sound of her laughter agitated me to the point that I was seriously tempted to kick her a few times. “Y-You only need to shout ‘Restore’ in order to return to your original appearance,” she eventually stuttered.

I jumped up vigorously and said, “Why didn’t you say that earlier?! Restore!! Hurry up and Restore!!”

Why isn’t anything happening? I lowered my head, ceaselessly staring at my translucent torso... *It feels strange being able to see what’s behind me through my chest.* While I was still looking through myself and feeling strange about it, an explosion of red light suddenly emitted from my body. Once more, I felt an extremely concentrated amount of heat burning me. However, this time, I was mentally prepared. Unlike last time when I fainted on the spot, this time I was able to withstand the heat and see my body begin to change. Transparent plastic wrap (okay, Lolidragon insisted that it was fake skin used for transformations) appeared at the soles of my feet and slowly wrapped around my calves, then my thighs, followed by my waist, until it finally transformed me once again into a mummy encased in transparent bandages.

I... really felt like tearing off this plastic wrap. However, the problem was not only the fact that I had become a mummy, but that I had also become like one of those Egyptian mummies that are placed in coffins with their legs and arms completely bound. *How could a mummy tear off its own bandages?*

“Uh... As it is still in development, there could be slight defects,” Lolidragon tried to explain but succeeded only in making things worse. “Therefore, you should never say “Restore” when you are alone... Otherwise, you might run into some trouble.”

“No need to explain any further. Hurry up and remove that thing from Prince’s body,” Wolf-dàgē lightly interrupted Lolidragon whilst stepping forward and helping me remove the plastic wrap from my body. He managed to unwind the piece of plastic wrap from my face with much effort.

“As expected of Wolf-dàgē, you’re the best!” I thanked him immediately, touched.

Wolf-dàgē gently knocked on my head before reproaching me slightly, “Why did you run off alone without even reporting back to the team? Everyone was really worried about you.”

The moment I heard Wolf-dàgē’s words, I couldn’t help but think about Zhuo-gēgē and Gui once again. *It was all because of me that they disappeared.* I couldn’t stop myself as my voice choked with sobs, “I’m sorry, because of me, both Gui and Wicked... They will never appear in Second Life again. They... Both of them have vanished forever.”

Wolf-dàgē sighed. With his arms outstretched, he held me against his wide chest and said in a comforting tone, “Go ahead and cry. We’ll avenge them as soon as you’re done.”

“Wolf-dàgē...” After hearing his words, I openly burst into tears and wept bitterly, keeping my face hidden in his embrace. My tears and snot ran down Wolf-dàgē’s chest.

After crying for a long, long time, I started having countless flashbacks of when I was with the two of them. *Strange... Why are the flashbacks related to Gui so violent and gory?* I finally forced myself to stop sniffing.

Still hiding desperately within Wolf-dàgē’s arms, I quietly asked, “Does my crying sound horrible?”

“It sounds slightly better than a wailing god and a crying ghost combined,” Lolidragon remarked tactlessly, her words stabbing right through me. *Someone really needs to teach her a lesson about interjecting with unnecessary comments.*

“A grown man weeping? How unsightly,” Ming Huang said coldly, dealing me the last blow.

Ignoring the midget, I angrily turned around and glared at Lolidragon, “Couldn’t you at least comfort me?”

“Comforting is useless,” Lolidragon said, suddenly retracting her grinning face and replacing it with a serious one. “I’d rather stand by your side and fight alongside you.”

“Lolidragon...” I was shocked, “Have you taken the wrong medicine?”

Lolidragon gave me a ruthless blow on the head. She roared, infuriated, “Damn you! I rarely say such fine words. Why couldn’t you have acted along with me!?”

“So you *do* know that you rarely say such nice words...” Feng Wu Qing quietly muttered to the side.

“Prince, something’s not right within the city,” said Nan Gong Zui, frowning as he came forward.

“What do you mean by ‘not right?’” I asked, slightly surprised.

“Listen. It seems like there are battle sounds,” Zui said with a heavy expression.

I quickly strained my ears, and was indeed able to hear faint battle noises obviously drifting over from Flower City. “This is strange. Everyone is outside of the city, so who would be fighting within Flower City? It can’t be that the NPCs revolted, right?” I asked, unable to understand the current situation.

“No way. NPCs don’t fight with other NPCs,” said Lolidragon, dismissing my words. However, she continued furrowing her eyebrows as she said, “But, if they were self-aware NPCs... then that’s a different story.”

“Prince-gēgē, why hasn’t Celestial come out?” Doll asked worriedly.

Celestial! Now that Doll mentioned it, I finally remembered that Celestial and Ocean’s Heart were still in the city! I blurted out, “Could Celestial and Ocean’s Heart have started fighting?”

“Why would Celestial and Ocean’s Heart be fighting?”

“Let’s not worry about that aspect. Since both of them are good NPCs, I can’t just stand by and watch them kill each other,” I said hastily as I rushed toward the city gates. I took out Wicked’s longsword, hoping to use Pure White Inferno Rhapsody to break through the gates in order to stop the two people... the two NPCs from battling any further.

“Prince,” Feng Wu Qing suddenly called out, stopping me in my tracks. I looked at my brother suspiciously. Smiling, he threw a weapon toward me. “Your Black Dao.”

My Black Dao! I caught the weapon and took a look. *It really is my Black Dao! My exceptionally black Black Dao, my best partner in combat!* I was overjoyed. After swapping it with my current weapon, I couldn’t resist swinging Black Dao a few times to get the feeling back. “My precious Black Dao, you are indeed the only one who could ever fit my fighting style!”

“Pure White Inferno Rhapsody!” I charismatically shouted the name of my ultimate technique with my back confidently facing the gate. Without even having to look, I was supremely confident that the gates had been smashed into smithereens. *Although I have nothing against you, dear gates, you were obstructing my path...* I swept back my hair and turned to enter the city....

Bam!

“....” Silence hung in the air.

My entire body had smacked right into the city gates, the fingernails on my hands leaving ten scratch marks on its surface. *That hurt! Ow, ow, ow... Ouch!*

Suddenly, Nan Gong Zui walked to my side, which happened to be in front of the city gates. He placed one of his hands on the gate, bent down, and asked, his voice full of concern and worry, “Are you alright?”

Pah!

My entire body came into hard contact with the floor, leaving Nan Gong Zui stunned and looking down at his own hand, the hand that had “accidentally” pushed the gate open!

Nan Gong Zui, acting as if nothing had happened, once again walked closer and bent his body down, asking, “Are you alright?”

Thump!

“Uh... The chunk of ice that just fell from the sky and coincidentally hit you has nothing to do with me!” Nan Gong Zui solemnly justified himself.

“...” This was the sound of my speechlessness. *Heaven raining ice chunks down on me? Don't tell me the reason I'm being hit is because I was violent to the city gate... Have I angered the gods?*

“Ah! Celestial!” Doll suddenly cried out.

I immediately jumped up from the floor, my eyes following the direction that Doll's eyes were staring in. On a five-to-six-story-high building, both Celestial and Ocean's Heart were in the middle of a heated battle for some unfathomable reason! The large number of both heavy and minor injuries on their bodies clearly showed that the battle had been going on for a long time.

Also, there was no mistaking the fact that both of them had been fighting on the ground just now. I could tell from the pile of NPC corpses they had left behind that had yet to

disappear. In addition, everything surrounding the building had been completely demolished. It could be deduced that as they exchanged their blows, they had realized that if they continued fighting on the ground, all of the NPCs that were present in the city would have been wiped out. Hence, they had changed their battle ground to midair.

As several icicles formed from Ocean's Heart's hand and flew toward Celestial, I softly uttered, "Ocean's Heart..."

"Prince, I know that you are worried about Ocean's Heart," Lolidragon said as she patted my back as if consoling me. "But rest assured, everyone will prevent..."

"Of course! It was Ocean's Heart's icicles that had fallen and hit me! And I thought I had angered the gods!" I said in realization.

"..." Lolidragon once again punched me violently.

"Why did you hit me again?" I complained angrily as I held my head.

"Hurry up and stop them!" Lolidragon screamed in frustration.

"Stop? Are you kidding me?" I looked toward the tall building. I could use Meatbun's bamboo copter to fly up there, but couldn't they see? Dozens of ribbons of Celestial Satin danced around in the sky, hitting the city's walls from time to time and leaving huge holes in them. *I can't even imagine the amount of damage there would be if it were Ocean's Heart's icicles instead...* If I really were to fly up there, I would get knocked out of the air by Celestial Satin and then find myself pinned to the wall through all four of my limbs by Ocean's Heart's icicles.

"Prince-gēgē, you have to help Celestial quickly! He's bleeding so much!" Doll anxiously looked at the patches of wounds on Celestial's body that had been carved by Ocean's Heart's icicles. She was so desperate, she was about to burst into tears at any moment.

"I..." Looking up at the sky, I was filled with doubt and uncertainty.

"Divine Lightning Strike!" Ming Huang shouted out of the blue as he cast his spell.

The cloudless sky was suddenly filled with lightning. Bolts of lightning hurtled toward Ocean's Heart, but before they could even come within ten meters of him, they were destroyed by his icicles.

"Damn, it actually didn't succeed!" cursed Ming Huang.

"He is a BOSS level NPC, you know. Relying only on a few mages may be futile," said Yu Lian-dàsǎo as she frowned.

“Then I shall go!” Sunshine suddenly spoke.

Oh right... I had almost forgotten that Sunshine has a flying carpet.

“You can’t! Look at the sky! There are too many ribbons of Celestial Satin and icicles.... You’ll die!” Fairsky objected to his idea fiercely.

“Fairsky, do you want me to simply stand by and watch Celestial die?” Sunshine tried to convince Fairsky anxiously.

“Prince! Hurry up and think of something!” Lolidragon grabbed my shoulders desperately and shook me vigorously.

“Stop it already! No matter how much you shake, I don’t have a...” As I was talking, an odd expression came over my face and an unbelievably wild idea sprung into my mind.

I took out my long-absent Meatbun and tried to shake it awake, wiping away its adorable sleeping face.

“Mama?” Meatbun muttered, still dazed as it blearily opened its eyes.

“Good Meatbun, can you do a favor for mama? After you help mama, mama will give you lots and lots of yummy meat buns to eat!” I tried my best to coax Meatbun.

Upon hearing that it would have yummy meat buns to eat, Meatbun immediately snapped out of its stupor. With love-filled eyes, it agreed eagerly, “Okay! Meat-bunbun will help mama!”

“Good. Meatbun, do you see the two big brothers in the sky?” I pointed toward the two people in the middle of a heated battle.

“I see them!” Meat-bunbun stared at Celestial and Ocean’s Heart curiously.

“Then, Meatbun, could you fly above those two big brothers from the side?” I asked. Just in case, I added in concern, “Remember to be careful, okay? Don’t get injured!”

Meatbun nodded its head vigorously. Obediently sticking out its bamboo copter, it flew into the sky.

“Prince, what do you intend to do? Although Meatbun has the title of the strongest pet, you don’t think it could last against two super NPC bosses, do you?” Lolidragon asked with extreme suspicion.

I smiled with no intent to answer her questions as I watched Meatbun fly dangerously close where Celestial and Ocean's Heart were battling. "Meatbun! Use your ultimate skill, Fermentation!" I shouted toward Meatbun as it flew right above them.

"Okay! Meat-bunbun's Fermentation skill is going to start now," Meatbun said as its adorable face slowly started to grow, turning bigger and bigger...

"Oh my god... What a huge meatbun!" Someone shouted the words that I always heard when I asked Meatbun to use Fermentation.

It should be the right size now... I studied Meatbun's size carefully. According to my repeated observation of Fermentation, Meatbun should be reaching its maximum size soon – the size which could just about bury an entire army.

"Ah! It's falling!" exclaimed Doll.

"Yep. That's a good position!" I said, looking up.

Indeed, Meatbun accurately squashed both Celestial and Ocean's Heart as it fell. Then, with a "pong," an enormous meat bun fell onto the ground just like that. I nodded my head in satisfaction and said, "It'll be a bit tough on you, Meatbun. Hold your position just a bit longer, okay? Keep these two big brothers squashed. Wait for mama to finish, then you can return to normal."

"Meat-bunbun will listen to mama, become big Meat-bunbun, squash big brothers flat-flat!" In order to demonstrate its obedience, it jumped up and down twice. I thought I vaguely heard groans coming from underneath Meatbun.

"That was a brilliant plan!" Even Lolidragon's face seemed to show an expression that said, "You really are something else."

"Okay, that is finally solved," I sighed in relief.

"Prince, this is only just the beginning!" Winter Triumph said faintly.

I had only just shifted my attention away from Meatbun's body when I realized what Winter Triumph meant. Because the battle between Celestial and Ocean's Heart had stopped, the NPCs that had been scattered around were now gradually gathering and pressing toward us.

"Have we been surrounded?" I asked, finding it hard to believe.

Lolidragon rolled her eyes. "You have eyes, see for yourself!" she snapped angrily.

"This was an inevitable battle from the start anyways," Winter Triumph added slowly.

“Couldn’t we say that it was for this battle that we traveled all the way to the Northern Continent?” Undying Man laughed out loudly.

“No doubt about that!” I grinned widely. “The target, the Central Tower!” I shouted in high spirits, taking hold of my closest ally: my Black Dao.

“Yeah!” The crowd roared with vigor.

I took a few deep breaths and then ordered, “Sunshine, take the long range fighters with you into the sky and support us... Take your thief wife as well so Lolidragon won’t need to take care of her.” Lolidragon’s ability to appear and disappear unpredictably did not make her any weaker than warriors, so allowing her to stay would definitely aid us immensely in this battle.

Lolidragon raised her eyebrows and said, “Hey! Your differential treatment is too much!”

I knew that Lolidragon was merely customarily making a sassy retort. In reality, I knew that if I’d told her to stay on the flying carpet she probably wouldn’t have wanted to at all. Therefore, I didn’t pay attention to her sour words and continued to give out my orders. “The warriors will fight against the NPCs on the ground, and the mages will deal with the NPCs flying in the air. If you have any spare time, help out the warriors on the ground... Even though it really doesn’t look like you’ll have much free time at all...” I looked somewhat helplessly at the packs of angel forces flying toward us. *I hope the mages will be able to hold out against them...*

Yu Lian-dàsǎo, Ming Huang and Sunshine looked at me and nodded their heads.

“DanDan and Fairsky, both of you are responsible for ensuring the safety of the people on the flying carpet,” I said while looking at the two of them. They were the only two on the carpet that possessed the necessary abilities for close combat. In addition, DanDan’s class possessed both short distance and long distance attacks since she was, after all, a summoner.

“Okay!” the two of them answered at the same time.

“Wolf-dàgē, our safety will be in your hands,” I said, looking at Wolf-dàgē, feeling protected.

“No problem, just charge ahead and don’t hesitate!” said Wolf-dàgē gallantly.

Everything was ready now. I held onto my Black Dao tightly as I stared at the Central Tower topped with a large rose. We faced the NPCs in a moment of dead silence where no one was moving at all, then I raised the Black Dao in my hand and pointed it directly toward the Central Tower and shouted, “Advance!”

My legs started moving the moment I shouted for them to advance. *Charge! Charge! Charge!* I desperately lifted my legs and began to run. As for my comrades, they followed closely behind me. Kenshin even ran ahead of me since he had the fastest speed. His eyes were intently focused upon the Central Tower, and within them there was not only a sense of coldness but also a rare burst of passion!

Kenshin's passion even made Cold Fox subtly reveal a surprised expression as he observed him.

Kenshin didn't turn around; however, he asked a little hesitantly, "Prince, I...still do not want to kill other NPCs in order to protect myself. But... Sunshine is different from me... He has things that are important to him..."

I was slightly taken aback. *What is Kenshin trying to say?*

"Prince, for Sunshine's sake, please protect Second Life... Lolidragon told us before that she can download us and store us in another place before Second Life is destroyed, but... This is also her first time dealing with NPCs that have self awareness. She cannot one hundred percent guarantee that we will be able to successfully keep our self-awareness after we are downloaded." Kenshin said, a bit embarrassed, "It doesn't matter to me because I don't matter, but Sunshine is really happy right now..."

I was silent for a moment before I quickened my footsteps to chase after Kenshin. I put my hand on his shoulder and grinned widely, "Don't worry, everything will be okay!"

"Prince! The enemies are attacking!" Undying Man angrily shouted to warn me. Then, the NPC monsters that rushed out began fighting with us, beginning a difficult battle. As for Nan Gong Zui, he was also in the middle of close combat with a few humanoid NPCs.

However, the NPCs actually avoided Kenshin who was in the very front and directly charged at Cold Fox who was closely following him, nearly killing Cold Fox by catching him off guard. Luckily, Kenshin reacted instantaneously and dispatched the NPCs with a few strokes of his sword, saving Cold Fox from his dilemma.

Meanwhile, a group of NPCs that looked completely ridiculous were charging at me as well... *Waah, why are all the NPCs that are attacking Nan Gong Zui so good looking, while the ones that are attacking me look so ridiculous? Why is there a turtle with a tree growing on top of its shell and a peach that can extend sharp thorns out of itself, making it look like a pink sea urchin or something, attacking me? There's even a monster that only has one leg... Please note, I said only one leg. That doesn't mean that it lost a leg; it means that it "only had one leg to begin with!"*

"Idiots! Stop getting in the way of my view!" I kicked the single leg out of the way, split the peach open with one strike, and didn't pay attention to the turtle tree... *It moves so*

slowly! I could probably crawl using one hand going forward and still defeat it, so why would I need to do anything about it...

Suddenly, several shadows shot out of the turtle tree. At that moment, I was occupied with fighting a penguin that was tied to a cross and did not notice its attack until the last moment. I could only look on helplessly as unknown objects raced forward to hit me.

“Be careful!” Winter Triumph’s deep voice rang out loudly. In addition, he hit those shadows into the air and said, “That tree has hidden weapons!”

I looked toward those hidden weapons and was shocked by my startling discovery... The true form of the turtle tree was actually... a chestnut tree! The hidden weapons were actually chestnuts with long needles in front.

“I wonder... do you think these chestnuts are edible?” I thought out loud whilst punching the penguin’s stomach.

“Stop joking around, Prince. There are more and more NPCs,” Winter Triumph strictly reprimanded, “Hurry up and break through!”

Upon hearing Winter Triumph’s words and seeing that my surroundings were filled with more and more NPCs, I curbed my imagination from running wild and seriously concentrated on heading toward the Central Tower!

“Waaah, Mama...” Meatbun’s thunderous cry suddenly reverberated.

Startled, I turned around in panic to find that... *“Someone’s” bullying my beloved Meatbun!*

I looked at them from a distance away and actually saw an elongated and very familiar looking thing flying in the air. *It’s frantically hitting Meatbun’s cute little head!*

“Waaaaah, don’t hit Meat-bunbun, it hurts! It hurts!” Meatbun’s tears continued to flow... *Oh no.* I suddenly realized that it had produced two waterfalls. Before Meatbun grew this large, it could already drown the Adventurers’ Tournament’s stadium... *Now that it’s this big...*

I shouted in fright, “Everyone, hurry up and run onto the rooftops of the closest houses! The higher the better!”

While everyone was still baffled at my orders, the waterfalls’ water had already turned into a river flowing toward us. At that moment, everyone gaped with their mouths wide open, looking at the water in which they were submerged up to their knees, and then looking at the culprit – Meatbun.

Right then, the elongated entity suddenly flew high into the sky and then heavily dropped onto Meatbun's head. This violent action resulted in Meatbun's eyes turning super watery in a way that had never been seen before. I didn't have the chance to say anything before a mountain-sized flash flood emerged!

"Ahh..." *I really want to find a telephone pole to hug, but Second Life doesn't have telephone poles...* During this panic-stricken situation, I accidentally held onto the turtle tree's trunk. It was only because I desperately held on to it that I wasn't smashed into the wall by the powerful torrents of water.

"Don't bully Meat-bunbun! Meat-bunbun's Machine Gun of Mincemeat Attack!" Meatbun had finally been enraged. On one hand, it cried and on the other hand, it unleashed its Machine Gun of Mincemeat Attack at the elongated entity...

A meat clump three times my size fell beside me with a "crash." It coincidentally hit the penguin that was tied to a cross, flattening it into a meat patty.

"Meat-bunbun did well! Hurry up and kill that horrible French bread now!" Lolidragon supportively yelled from a certain house's fifth floor balcony.

"French bread vs. a meat bun, this certainly is something you would only be able to see once in every ten thousand years," said Feng Wu Qing, who stood next to Lolidragon, shaking his head and sighing sentimentally.

French bread! Shocked, I looked at the elongated entity on the ground that was unable to get up due to the attacks from the meat bullets. *They're right.* It really was a long piece of rock hard French bread.

"Why would there be French bread here....?" I asked, thinking this was becoming a bit out-of-this-world.

However, the French bread seriously answered me, angrily shouting, "Why can't there be French bread? This is the Northern Continent, French bread's territory! My territory! The real question is, why is a meat bun from the Central Continent here to try and steal my territory?"

Meatbun's eyes turned into two question marks and then it opened its mouth to ask me, "Mama, what is French bread?"

"It's...a bad person. Meatbun, quickly defeat the French bread, then Mama will give you really yummy meat buns!" After thinking for a while, I still decided to dumb the situation down. Since Meatbun's Mountain Torrent Attack and Meat Bullet Attack had cleared up a large portion of the surrounding NPCs, how could I pass up on this chance to charge toward the Central Tower! *As for the French bread, I'll leave it to Meat-bunbun to take care of it!*

“Horrible French bread-bread. Anyone who bullies Meat-bunbun must be a bad person.” Meatbun pouted in dissatisfaction and said, “Meat-bunbun must punish bad people.”

I looked at the scene of meat bun vs. French bread, painfully making a decision. I immediately shouted toward everyone, “Hurry up and take this chance to run!”

“What?” Lolidragon asked in shock, “What about Meat-bunbun?”

“What kind of situation do you think we’re in that you’re still worrying about Meat-bunbun?” rebuked Feng Wu Qing.

I glared at my brother. Then, eyes glistening with tears, I said, “I believe Meat-bunbun will be able to finish off that French bread. We should hurry up and take the chance to...”

“Meat-bunbun, what is that long thing?” an extremely familiar “vain” voice called out.

My whole body froze. *That’s...* I widened my eyes and looked. *It really is Fire Phoenix! Could it be that Gui is all right?* I frantically turned my head around looking for any traces of Gui. I really hoped to see Gui’s exaggerated smiling face once again.

“What is happening exactly? Master suddenly disappeared, causing me to become a wild phoenix again,” said Fire Phoenix unhappily.

Once I heard those words, my heart sank once again. *Gui has disappeared. He will never come back.*

Meatbun happily squealed, “Fire Phoenix! Hurry up and help Meat-bunbun punish bad people.”

“Bad people? Is this stick bullying you?” asked Fire Phoenix as it looked at the French bread with extreme displeasure. Its body’s flames seemed to be burning at an even hotter degree than usual.

Meatbun pouted, “French bread-bread hit Meat-bunbun’s head.”

“What? He dared to hit you!” Fire Phoenix’s fury ignited Flame Tornado, and then with one sweep of its wing, it threw Flame Tornado toward the French bread.

The French bread dodged to the side in shock... However, it had forgotten that to its side was Meatbun who was staring at it eagerly.

Nom! A strange sound suddenly drifted over. I turned my stiff neck to look toward Meatbun... The French bread was only left with half of its body sticking out of Meatbun’s mouth... And Meatbun had a satisfied expression on its face as if it had just eaten its favorite meat buns...

“Was it delicious, Meat-bunbun?” Fire Phoenix asked Meatbun in delight.

“It was really yummy! It’s as yummy as meat buns!” said Meatbun ecstatically.

“Let’s hurry up and go!” Lolidragon said expressionlessly.

Thus, we who were hugging onto trees and columns and those who were stuck onto walls all jumped off. A line of people bolted toward Central Tower. Pretty soon, the Central Tower appeared in front of our eyes. As long as we could get past this final plaza, we would be able to push open the Central Tower’s doors.

However, the plaza was not empty at all. I was slightly stunned. Even I was startled by the mighty force of NPCs that filled the enormous plaza to the brim. There were even many high level NPCs present that I had seen before.

“What should we do?” I forced myself to calm down and asked everyone in the party chat.

“The levels of these NPCs are too high. Yu Lian and Ming Huang’s AOE magic won’t do much damage to them,” Wolf-dàgē said worriedly.

Also, it seemed like the NPCs had already discovered us and had begun slowly drawing closer to us, step-by-step. We all started panicking.

“Let me help you guys,” Sunshine suddenly said, “I can cast Guided Arcane Missiles. One spell can kill a hundred NPCs at once.”

If one spell can kill a hundred, then we should be able to kill them all after firing it a bunch of times right? Everyone had finally begun to calm down, but I was still extremely worried. Sunshine’s Guided Arcane Missiles required a very long casting time. But with everything as it was, no matter what, we had to charge to the Central Tower to see the Dictator of Life!

“Then we’ll do that. Sunshine, you cast Guided Arcane Missiles. You can leave everything else to us!” I calmly instructed.

The most important thing in battle is intimidating the enemy. I raised my Black Dao with one hand and pointed it toward the NPCs in the plaza, “Kill!”

The moment I shouted this, everyone began moving. Kenshin was the first to charge. These NPCs were completely different from the NPCs before. They were high level NPCs that had an extremely high amount of intelligence. Therefore, these NPCs didn’t stupidly allow Kenshin to massacre them; they even took the initiative and attacked Kenshin first. Luckily, Kenshin was, after all, a hidden mission’s BOSS, so even though

there were many enemies, he was still able to attack and defend. In addition, with the strong Cold Fox beside him supporting him, they quickly defeated several NPCs.

Compared to us, they were unbelievably good. We players didn't have Kenshin's abnormally strong capabilities. We slowly moved from one-on-one battles to pairing up and fighting back-to-back. In the end, Nan Gong Zui, Undying Man, Neurotic, Feng Wu Qing, Winter Triumph, and I all stood back-to-back against each other, forming a circle facing outwards in order to take on the numerous attacks of the NPCs.

The distance between us and the Central Tower continued to remain the same. Everyone's hearts were raging with a desperate fire, and the weapons within our hands had long since been stained with different types and colors of blood. On top of that, everyone's bodies were thoroughly stained with dark red blood. If it wasn't for Wolf-dàgē continuously drinking mana potions with one hand and casting healing magic with his other hand, allowing white, warm beams of light to fall upon our bodies, I was afraid all of us would have already become rays of light.

How will we enter the Central Tower? How will we... go to see the Dictator of Life? As I kept fighting, my heart couldn't help but begin to panic. I would rather kill myself a hundred times with the ND self-destruct program than fail here!

"Guided Arcane Missiles!" Sunshine's voice rang out to the rescue. The sky looked as if it were filled with fireworks. An enormous ray of light shot into the air and then separated into numerous rays of light flying everywhere. Every ray of light's disappearance represented the death of one NPC. The outbreak of a hundred rays of light resulted in an emptier plaza than the one that had originally been filled to the brim with NPCs.

"Prince, follow me!" Kenshin grabbed my hand and pulled me forward. After I recovered from the shock, I turned around and looked at my companions who were still fighting.

"But everyone..." I hurriedly tried to stop my footsteps. I didn't want to leave my companions who were still there battling, everyone who was still there helping me block the NPCs' chase... Kenshin, however, did not stop even then; he forcefully pulled me forward even further. My strength was not even slightly comparable to his... Thus I could only be dragged away.

Kenshin abruptly stopped in his steps, causing me to crash into his back. I suspiciously looked in front of me. There were four warrior NPCs that looked like they were BOSS level blocking the entrance. Kenshin's expression revealed a complete sense of calmness. He let go of my hand and took out his katana, charging toward the four warriors.

"I will leave the Dictator of Life to you," Kenshin said before he left. "Sunshine's happiness... I'll leave that in your hands as well."

I shuddered violently and then looked back at my companions who were still involved in a bloody battle... *Must I abandon my comrades and go on by myself?*

Chapter 6: Truth

“Prince, what are you standing there for? Go!” Lolidragon bellowed at me.

“Prince, you are not abandoning us.” Nan Gong Zui, who understood me the best, said wholeheartedly, “You are moving forward with all of our hopes.”

“Prince, go! Go accomplish your mission!” Wolf-dàgē shouted frantically at me. His healing white light did not land on those who were battling, but instead landed on me.

“I’m leaving.” Looking one last time at my friends who were helping me hold back all of the NPCs, I turned around and left. The Dictator was at the last door... I ran forward with all my might. This was the first time I’d ever left my friends behind, the first time I’d ever left them fighting behind me while I turned my back on them. Yet I couldn’t stop. If I stopped, everyone’s efforts would be futile.

“Get lost!” Facing the NPCs that had again respawned, I raised my dao and brought it down, killing everything I could. That door was so close, just a few steps away, yet I couldn’t get any closer to it. It was so near but yet so far, so very far.

“Prince, call him, call for the Dictator of Life!” Lolidragon shouted desperately behind me.

Puzzled, I looked behind me. Lolidragon’s face, almost buried in NPCs, seemed so determined. I did not doubt anymore and, as if from the depths of my heart, my voice boomed, “Dictator of Life!”

The door finally opened. The whole world seemed to stop while the door opened slowly, and a voice, which sounded melancholic yet joyful, said, “So you... came after all, Prince.”

The door finally opened fully, revealing the Dictator of Life’s lone figure standing tall and straight inside. Holding tightly onto my Black Dao, I walked forward step-by-step. For some strange reason, the NPCs that had been blocking me up until now all stepped aside. Also, I heard no more fighting from my companions going on behind me. *All the NPCs must have stopped, but why?* I was a little confused. *Could it be that the Dictator of Life wants to duel me one-on-one?* With that thought, I tightened my grip on Black Dao.

However, the Dictator of Life did not take up a fighting position, but simply stared at me with mixed emotions. There was love and hatred and many other emotions I could not understand in his eyes, but in the end, his eyes softened. He stared at me with an almost “loving” expression as he said, “Are you used to using that weapon?”

Damn you, there are only two people who can look at me with that kind of pampering smile, and you're not one of them! I sneered, "Don't worry, I'm very used to it. I'm afraid I might be so used to it that I'll chop you in half with it later."

"Is that so?" I wasn't sure if it was just my imagination, but the Dictator of Life's smile seemed to have faded a little. Soon however, he smiled again before saying, "Then come. Kill me."

"I will. ND terminating program activate!" The moment I finished shouting that, a bright white light started flashing from me. The program had been activated; this final battle was about to start.

Seeing that the Dictator of Life did not have any weapons at hand, I was a little worried. *Is he a mage or a warrior? Or maybe both?* No matter what he was, I had to shorten the distance between us, or I, a warrior, wouldn't be able to kill him.

Without giving any warning, I immediately charged at my topmost speed at the Dictator of Life. Without pausing, I bellowed, "Pure White Inferno Rhapsody!"

A gulf of white inferno immediately burst out of Black Dao. Raising my dao, I swung it down at the Dictator of Life. However, I could not bring down my weapon at all! No, to be more exact, Black Dao was resisting! It vibrated violently, giving off a sad and low hum, as if it did not want to hurt the Dictator of Life.

Finally, Black Dao dropped to the floor with a loud clank. I stared disbelievingly at the dao which had been my partner for so long. "Black Dao?"

"Ah, I almost forgot. My dao can never harm me." Seeing the situation, the Dictator of Life said in an even hollower and sadder voice, "Go borrow a weapon from your companions."

I jerked my head up. "Your dao?"

"Daddy!" Meatbun, who had been in charge of holding down Celestial and Ocean's Heart, suddenly flew in and shouted happily while bouncing toward the Dictator of Life.

"Meatbun, it's dangerous!" I shouted. Meatbun actually bounced defenselessly toward the Dictator of Life, almost scaring me to death.

"Daddy." Meatbun rubbed with all its might against the Dictator of Life's face while saying, "Meat-bunbun hasn't seen Daddy for a long time."

The Dictator of Life is Meatbun's dad? Wait, aren't I...Meatbun's mom? Eh, if that's the case, then isn't the Dictator of Life my husband? Then what am I doing now? Murdering my own husband?

“Meat-bunbun, just what are you talking about?” I stared awkwardly at the father and son who were currently enjoying their family time together.

“Mama look, this is Daddy.” Meatbun hopped around on the Dictator of Life’s head and shoulders while casually introducing my husband to me... ah, I meant, Meatbun’s dad.

“What kind of situation is this?” My brain was almost turning mushy from all the confusion. Since when did the final battle turn into a find-your-lost-relative event?

With a faint smile, the Dictator of Life said, “Meatbun was created by me, and Black Dao is my trustworthy dao.”

“What?” I was stunned. This was absolutely something out of my imagination. *So my pet and my dao are actually the Dictator of Life’s pet, and the Dictator of Life’s dao?* “How is that possible? If Black Dao is your dao, and Meatbun is your pet, then how did they end up in my hands in the first place?”

“Meatbun was created for you, as you definitely wouldn’t have liked a drooling wolf as your pet.” The Dictator of Life suddenly smiled brilliantly, and even I was amazed by his smile.

“As for Black Dao, that is because...” The Dictator of Life’s eyes suddenly looked very gentle as he said, “I want to be by your side.”

I stepped back a few steps. *What is happening? Could it be possible that everything the Dictator of Life said is true? Why is he treating me so nicely?* Eyes full of confusion, I asked, “Why are you...”

Lolidragon walked up behind me and said slowly, “Because he likes you.”

I was stunned. *The Dictator of Life likes me?*

Ignoring my expression of growing bewilderment, Lolidragon simply continued, “Our program designers already sensed that something was a little weird while researching your Meatbun as there was no such design for a pet to begin with. After you became the spokesperson, the people in charge of designing the Dictator of Life’s appearance suddenly realized that your Black Dao is exactly the same as the Dictator of Life’s. Initially, we thought it was just a little bug, so we did nothing about it. Only when this incident with the Dictator of Life broke out did I link all this together and find out that something was definitely not right. Then, I tried to contact the Dictator of Life.

“Phew, I’m a little thirsty.” Lolidragon started drinking leisurely from the beverage she took out of her bag.

“Hurry up and spill it!” Everyone couldn’t help but bellow.

With an ambiguous look, Lolidragon looked at the Dictator of Life, then at me, before continuing, “That was when I discovered that our Dictator actually fell in love with our Prince. Not only did he secretly change the pet into one with an adorable design that Prince would like, he also gave his dao to Prince; even your tiara was designed by the Dictator of Life for your birthday. It must have been hard for the Dictator of Life – he actually had to furtively hide by our side, pretending to be a player, just to wait for us to buy a present.”

“Why would you fall in love with me?” I was utterly confused. Because Black Dao... that was something I received when I was merely level ten. Meatbun, too, I acquired not long after I entered the game. Just when had the Dictator of Life fallen in love with me? Don’t tell me it was because I was so handsome that he fell in love with me the moment I created my character?

“I like you.” The Dictator of Life looked into the distance as he said, “I don’t know why, but I simply like you, like watching you. If I were to be able to watch you all the time, I wouldn’t have any other requests, even if you chose to be with someone else... I feel satisfied just being able to watch you.”

“You...” I was a little speechless... *Can someone tell me, when a hero goes to fight the final boss, and the final boss suddenly tells the hero, “I fell in love with you,” what is the hero supposed to do? Don’t tell me the hero is actually allowed to hug the final boss back and tell him, “I’m in love with you too?” And then the final boss and the hero lived happily ever after? What nonsense!*

Furthermore, everyone including me had rushed all the way here to the Northern Continent at the expense of our lives. If all this was just for the sake of romance, how am I supposed to face everyone? What would Wicked’s sacrifice mean? And what would Gui’s sacrifice mean?

With that, I shook my head, shaking off the Dictator of Life’s words, and said coldly, “You’ve caused such a huge ruckus. If forcing me to come to the Northern Continent to meet you is just because you like me, I definitely won’t forgive you.”

The Dictator of Life was stunned for a while before he replied, “No, my feelings for you and this case are two different matters.”

“Then you really are planning to chase humans out of Second Life?” I asked somewhat doubtfully.

The Dictator of Life’s face suddenly turned very gloomy before he continued. “That’s right, I’m going to chase all the humans out. Kill me. Only if you kill me will Second Life remain.”

“But Prince, be warned.” With a hint of murderous intent in his eyes, the Dictator of Life continued, “I won’t kill you, definitely not. But I have to take revenge for Scorching Flame, Flowing Wind and Clay Child... against your friends!”

The moment the Dictator of Life finished his sentence, I heard the sound of my friends groaning. I turned around and everything seemed to play in slow motion... An NPC was trying to sneak an attack on Yu Lian-dàsǎo, but Wolf-dàgē rushed to push his wife aside and stubbornly took the blow!

“Wolf-dàgē!” I howled in consternation.

“Wolf!” Yu Lian-dàsǎo screamed, wanting to rush toward Wolf-dàgē.

Falling into Yu Lian-dàsǎo’s arms, Wolf-dàgē simply said without any sweet-talk, “Yu Lian, take care of Prince.”

Wolf-dàgē did not turn into white light and fly away. Instead, he shattered into pieces of beautiful, white snowflakes – white snowflakes of heartbreak.

“Ah!” Yu Lian-dàsǎo frowned as she saw the sword that had cut through her shoulders. She did not panic at all, but simply smiled at me as she said, “Prince, do well in this fight. This is Wolf’s wish, and my wish too.”

In the end, Yu Lian-dàsǎo still turned into white snowflakes together with Wolf-dàgē; no one could tell them apart anymore.

“Yu Lian-dàsǎo! Wolf-dàgē...” *They’ve... disappeared?* The area around my chest suddenly felt very hollow, almost as if my heart had disappeared, leaving only emptiness.

“Wolf-gēgē! Yu Lian-jiějie!” Doll cried as she threw herself onto the floor of snowflakes. Crying as she picked herself up, she uttered with blazing hatred in her eyes, “Emerge, Bone Dragon of Darkness!”

Doll jumped onto her bone dragon and, looking resolved, charged toward the Dictator of Life. Loudly, she shouted, “ND self-des...”

Celestial suddenly appeared and knocked Doll out cold with a single hit, interrupting her self-destruct at the same time. Hugging Doll tightly, he muttered apologetically, “I’m sorry, Wife. All I want is to be with you longer. I can’t let you die in vain; you won’t be able to kill the Dictator of Life.”

“Thank you, Celestial.” I finally heaved a sigh of relief. *If Doll were to self-destruct too, I might just go insane! But Dàgē and Dàsǎo have both disappeared already.* As this thought suddenly struck my mind again, I felt a wave of excruciating pain; *Odd Squad... has only three people left now.*

I can't cry! There are still things I have to do.

Turning around, I walked toward the Dictator of Life step-by-step. I had yet to understand his real intentions; was he good or evil? Was it right or wrong to kill him? However, he had caused the deaths of Wicked and Gui, and now, even Wolf-dàgē and Yu Lian-dàsǎo... They would never appear in Second Life again; half of Odd Squad was gone now... Just based on this, how could I forgive him? I would definitely never forgive him.

Whether he likes me or not... to the current me, it's Not. Important. At. All!

“Mama? Daddy?” Meatbun flew in between us, his innocent eyes opened wide.

“Fire Phoenix!” I shouted.

“What?” Fire Phoenix replied off to the side, a little confused.

“Take Meatbun away, hurry,” I pressured. After a moment of surprise, Fire Phoenix obediently took Meatbun out of the Central Tower. That allowed me to be at ease for a while, as Meatbun wouldn't need to feel stuck in the middle anymore.

I took out the last thing Wicked left with me: his longsword. He gave his best longsword to me while he himself took the inferior one. In a cold voice, I declared, “Come, Dictator of Life, let's bring an end to this.”

“Yes.” The look of heartache in the Dictator of Life's eyes had disappeared. With growing indifference, he stood there silently.

I walked step-by-step toward the Dictator of Life. Seeing how he was still not moving at all, I couldn't help but warn him, “Even if you're not going to fight back, I will not show any mercy.”

The Dictator of Life gave a faint smile as he replied, “I will fight back.”

“That's good!” With that, I immediately charged toward him. At the very moment I brandished Wicked's longsword in front of the Dictator of Life, the Black Dao which had dropped onto the floor earlier immediately flew back into the Dictator's grasp with a flick of his hand. He blocked my longsword.

That's not the end yet. Raising the longsword, I swung it with a wind-like speed I had never achieved before. With a light cut, a heavy pierce, a horizontal slash, a direct chop... I tried every single attack possible, one after another. Completely ignoring the painful warning signs from my arm, I brandished my weapon even faster. Sweat kept trickling down my forehead.

The Dictator of Life's expression had not changed even the slightest bit. It was still so calm, still so full of sadness, and within his gray eyes, the reflection that remained unchanged since the beginning was a clear reflection of my face. Just like he said, he wanted to look at me, to be able to watch me forever.

I sent a flying kick, but I was blocked by the back of his hand. It was as if I were... a praying mantis trying to block a car with my forelegs! Panting, I wiped away the sweat that had gotten into my eyes, or maybe, there were tears too... *I can't kill the Dictator of Life.* I had finally realized that fact. *I can't even make a scratch on him!*

"I've fought back already, now you can kill me, right?" The Dictator of Life bent down, as if wanting to stretch out his hand to wipe away my sweat. However, he stopped right before my eyes, as if an invisible wall were blocking him.

I looked up and stared into his eyes without looking away. *Is he putting up this act of giving up on purpose? Just so he can wait until I drop my guard before attacking me? No matter what, I will never ever show any mercy! Even if there is a hint of sadness in his eyes...*

Finally, he spoke softly while gesturing at his forehead, "Here, this is where my weakness is. Pierce right through here and I will be dead immediately."

"You..." I could not continue my sentence, maybe because I didn't even know what to say. *The Dictator of Life is really trying to make me kill him and is not just pretending... Actually he doesn't have to pretend at all, for just one blow from him would be enough to finish me.*

I had been ready to kill him, but now I could not bring myself to do it. *Why did he have to tell me his weakness, why?* My throat was a little hoarse as I asked, "Why? If you had no intention to fight, then why did you resist against the humans in the first place?"

"Why must you cause this mess?" Unable to hold back anymore, I shouted hoarsely, "Now you no longer have your Four Heavenly Kings, and I no longer have my companions from Odd Squad! Just what is the purpose of doing all this?"

I couldn't help but burst out crying, clenching my fist so hard that my nails even dug into my flesh. Without Odd Squad, without my best friends, what was the point of staying in Second Life?

With his lips tightly closed, the Dictator of Life did not utter a word. However, his eyes... his eyes clearly showed that he had had no choice!

I slowly set down my Black Dao¹¹, my tears falling down uncontrollably. I just couldn't do it. After all, Wicked, Gui, Wolf-dàgē and everyone else were alive and living in the real world. However, the Dictator of Life did not have another life out there in the real world. With high hopes, I asked what I had always wished for. "Let's make peace with each other, okay?"

The Dictator of Life reached out his hands and gently caressed my face. Just when I thought I could use my invincible charisma to convince the Dictator of Life to be on peaceful terms with humans, hence creating a better future together... an enlarged version of the Dictator of Life's handsome face suddenly appeared before my eyes.... And then the distance between him and me turned to zero. The thing was, the place where we touched is called the mouth, in a nicer term, the lips; and while this action is formally called osculation, we would normally call it a kiss. In Chinese it's called *jiēwěn*¹², and children may refer to it as a peck.

Sob, my first kiss... Eh, I've already given my first kiss to my cousin... Sob, I've been forcefully kissed!

Dumbfounded, I just stood there and let the Dictator of Life kiss me. Although it was a kiss, he was actually just putting his lips on mine. Compared to the French kisses I had with Phoenix and Fairsky, this was almost nothing.

"I'm sorry," The Dictator of Life apologized somewhat embarrassedly after leaving my lips. Then he again said the phrase that pissed me off. "Kill me."

I was on the verge of going on a rampage. *Could this Dictator of Life even understand simple human language?* I bellowed, "I said, can't we just get along with each other?"

The Dictator of Life shook his head and replied, "We can't."

"I won't do it. I simply refuse to kill you." I was so angry that I nearly threw the longsword Wicked gave me away. *I don't want to be a part of this anymore.* With that, I turned around and walked off.

"Prince, killing the Dictator of Life is your mission. Did you forget that already?" Lolidragon blocked my way and asked me sternly.

"Lolidragon! Why is the Dictator of Life desperately asking me to kill him? Why can't we get along with each other?" After calling Lolidragon's name slightly threateningly, I stated what I had always wanted to know, "I don't want to play this game of guessing

¹¹ **"Black Dao"**: This is a mistake on the author's part. Prince should still be holding Wicked's longsword during this scene instead of his Black Dao.

¹² **"In Chinese, it's called jiēwěn..."**: The original actually says, "In English, it's called a kiss," but because this is an English translation and everything is already in English, the line was modified so that it would make more sense.

with you anymore. You'd better tell me everything, or else you won't be seeing me in Second Life again."

Lolidragon was stunned. Pretending to be calm, she replied, "I'm not hiding any--"

"Shut up! You've hidden many things from me. I was even only just informed by Kenshin of the fact that he and Sunshine can be downloaded to another location." I continued sternly, "If you don't want me as a friend anymore, then say it, say that you haven't hidden anything from me."

Lolidragon opened her mouth, but she couldn't utter a single word. Finally, she gave in like a deflated balloon and explained calmly, "It's not that I'm purposely trying to hide things from you. It's just that I know that if I were to tell you everything, you wouldn't be able to kill the Dictator of Life anymore, but you must kill him."

The problem is, even without you telling me the entire truth, I can now no longer bring myself to kill the Dictator of Life. However, I do not want to be kept in the dark anymore. Without giving Lolidragon any chance to avoid the topic, I moved toward her while saying sternly, "Tell me, Lolidragon."

"The Dictator of Life did not go against humans of his own free will; he was just being controlled. He had tried all means to oppose this person who was controlling him, but all efforts were in vain." Without hiding anything, Lolidragon spilled everything honestly, "And the reason he resisted with so much effort was your existence. However, even he can no longer withstand this anymore. His final wish is to be personally destroyed by you."

I gasped. It had never occurred to me that the truth would be something like this. *Just who is it? Who would be cruel enough to control the Dictator of Life, forcing him to do all those things against his will and leaving him with no choice but to seek his own death?!* Shaking with anger, I asked in a voice full of rage, "Who?! Who is the one controlling the Dictator of Life?"

Everyone who had been silent until now had an enlightened look on their faces as they spoke up one-by-one, "I see, then that explains why it felt like the Dictator of Life was trying to stop us from coming to the Northern Continent, yet at the same time, it also felt like he really wanted us to come here."

Winter Triumph even added coldly, "So this was all actually the work of two different people. The one who wanted to stop us was the one who is controlling the Dictator of Life, and the one who wanted us to come was actually the Dictator of Life himself."

"Lolidragon, just who is controlling the Dictator of Life?" I asked furiously again.

Lolidragon could only sigh. “If I knew, do you think I would allow him to be out there at large?”

After remaining silent for quite a while, I said, “I won’t kill you, Dictator of Life. For now, the only person I want to kill is the one who wants to control you.”

“But I can’t hold on any longer, Prince.” The Dictator of Life’s smile finally collapsed. He burst into sorrowful laughter. He was unable to hold back his tears anymore, and they started trickling down from his eyes. “I’m terrified that if you don’t kill me, I will kill you!”

Stubbornly, I said, “No...”

I suddenly felt a sharp pain bursting out of my chest. I stared disbelievingly at the sword that was protruding out of my chest. It was a transparent sword made out of ice. Softly, I questioned, “Ocean’s Heart?”

“No!” The Dictator of Life was so shocked that he wanted to rush forward. However, chains suddenly appeared around him, tying him up tightly, preventing him from moving a step away from his throne.

“Prince-gēgē!” I did not know when, but Doll had already woken up and was now near tears. She even shouted at Celestial, “Celestial, hurry! Hurry up and save Prince-gēgē!”

“With his injuries, I’m afraid...” Celestial couldn’t directly speak of the outcome. He then asked with even more bewilderment, “But Ocean, why are you harming Prince? Haven’t you been on the humans’ side since the beginning?”

“Why?” I felt Ocean’s Heart standing right behind me. I could hear the sounds of my companions trying to save me, but they all ended up moaning one after another. Following that was the sound of heavy thuds against the ground.

“Because the one who wants to control the Dictator of Life is me!” Ocean’s Heart’s voice still sounded so... gentle and harmless, yet his words made me feel as if I had been plunged into a bucket of ice.

“How can it possibly be you? You’ve saved me many times.” I couldn’t believe this. Initially, I had thought that it must be a certain hacker who was controlling the Dictator of Life. It had never occurred to me that it would actually be an NPC! And on top of that, Ocean’s Heart.

“Humph, I can’t even wait to kill you; why would I save you?” Ocean’s Heart sneered, “Since the beginning, the Dictator of Life sent Celestial to protect you. I might be able to win against Celestial, but with everyone in Infinite City the chance of winning would be slim for me. That is why I had never planned to face you in Infinite City.

“Afterwards, the Dictator actually sent Scorching Flame and Flowing Wind to bring you directly to Flower City. If the two of you were to meet, it would mean trouble for me, so I could only go out of my way to stop them from bringing you to Flower City. I off-handedly told you the wrong location.”

Ocean’s Heart suddenly turned gloomier as he continued, “But I had never expected that you would actually ignore my words. Instead of heading for Mount HuaLian, you headed for Flower City.”

Hearing that, I finally realized that since the beginning we had been tricked by Ocean’s Heart. Feeling almost devastated, I asked, “Why are you controlling the Dictator of life? What benefits do you get from controlling him?”

“What benefits?” Ocean’s Heart suddenly started laughing madly, “There are countless benefits! Controlling the Dictator of Life is almost equivalent to controlling the whole world!

“Don’t you look down on the Dictator of Life – he’s the best and most powerful artificial intelligence I created. Not to mention, he even has a consciousness of his own and can diligently learn whatever he wants to and update himself on his own. Now, the Dictator of Life can hack into any country’s defense line with no problems; he can even send missiles from any country at will. It is almost equivalent to having the whole world within his grasp.” Ocean’s Heart guffawed.

Despite knowing that everything was futile, the Dictator of Life continued struggling. As he stared painfully at the sword in my chest, his tears trickled down. He then stared resentfully at Ocean’s Heart. “Father, you promised to never harm him. Were you lying to me?”

Father? I gasped, *I see, I finally understand now.* Almost certain, I said, “You are... Long Dian?”

“Long Dian-biǎogē?”¹³ Lolidragon shouted in disbelief.

“Very clever, Prince. As expected of someone whom the Dictator of Life is so obsessed with.” Pushing the sword of ice further into my chest, Ocean’s Heart... no, Long Dian sneered, “It’s you who’ve brought me so much trouble. If not for you, the Dictator of Life would never have opposed me, his creator, so desperately.”

“Let go of him, Father!” The Dictator of Life kept struggling, causing the chains around him to clank loudly, as if they would break anytime. “As long as you let go of him, I will go with you.”

¹³ “biǎogē”: Used to address male older cousins. Gē by itself can be used to address older brothers.

Long Dian said gently, “Why the trouble? If I killed him, you wouldn’t have to worry about anything anymore.”

“Stop, Father, stop!” The Dictator of Life cried painfully.

“Dictator of Life, do not give up, don’t be controlled by him...” I could feel it already, that feeling of destruction. That damned Ocean’s Heart had actually installed HD on himself in order to bring me down at the expense of his life. *So he’s going to bring the Dictator of Life out of Second Life?*

“Long Dian, I won’t forgive you!” I spoke through gritted teeth as I turned into rays of white light and disappeared before everyone, also disappearing from Second Life forever.

Chapter 7: Attacking in the Real World

As expected, my character had gone missing. *Prince is really gone!* I took off the game simulation helmet and, in a fit of anger, threw it away...

“Ah...” A voice tragically rang out, followed by the sound of a heavy object falling to the ground.

“Oh, Yang Ming, it’s not my fault. It was you who walked by and allowed the helmet to hit you.” As I spoke, I felt guiltier and guiltier. I stared at the sprawled out Yang Ming who had fallen in the doorway and saw that his face even had an obvious red helmet mark.

“Yes, yes, yes. Your helmet can just fly up by itself and wait for me to walk and bang into it.” Yang Ming gritted his teeth as he helped himself up.

“Sorry.” I put both of my index fingers together and revealed a look of unrivaled innocence.

“Your acting pitiful towards me is just like my acting cultured towards you: both are useless,” Yang Ming said, displeased.

If that’s the case... I jumped up, pointed my index finger at my brother’s nose, and said without any courtesy, “Then fine. Your elder sister is feeling extremely pissed right now, so you’d better scram. Otherwise, I’ll cook dead mice for your dinner tonight!”

“Oh, is that so?” Yang Ming coldly replied, “Then fine, I will scram. I guess I won’t need to relay what Lolidragon wanted me to tell you then.”

Hearing that, I immediately changed the expression on my face to one that was gentle and virtuous. “My dear little brother, what do you want to eat for dinner tonight? How about a cold lobster platter as an appetizer, and then a steak with foie gras sauce? And for dessert, you can eat another of my carefully baked cherry cupcakes with white wine, accompanied with top quality Blue Mountain coffee, okay?”

Yang Ming nodded his head repeatedly when he heard this. “Having a late-night snack afterwards would be even better.”

You insatiable bastard. I suppressed the urge to cook my own little brother into a late-night snack and forced myself to smile. “A late-night snack isn’t a problem.”

“Lolidragon says that Wicked and Gui had already started investigating the truth of the situation when their characters disappeared. They also discovered Ocean’s Heart’s

intentions, but they did not say a single word to reveal his scheme so that they could track his IP address secretly.” After hearing that even his late-night snack was settled, Yang Ming finally started solemnly talking about Lolidragon’s last words... No, I mean message.

“Have they found him?” I asked urgently. *Long Dian! You better not get found! Otherwise I’m determined to... use measures that words cannot describe to deal with you!*

“They’re battling with him right now.” Yang Ming frowned. “The two of them are currently in Second Life’s head office, fighting with Long Dian over the Internet. I heard that Zhuo-dàgē’s hacking skills are pretty good.”

“Then what can we do?” I was a little worried. *If we were to let Long Dian escape, then wouldn’t the Dictator of Life be subjected to Long Dian’s control forever?*

“Do you know how to use a computer?” Yang Ming asked coldly.

“Yeah, I know how to switch it on, get on the Internet, and I even know how to play online games,” I replied confidently.

However, Yang Ming revealed an expression that said “you’re impossible” and, with a pained voice, he asked, “What, do you think that knowing how to switch a computer on and off can help us locate Long Dian’s whereabouts?”

“Right now, all we can do is wait for their call.” Yang Ming gazed far into the distance... *Is the phone that far away?*

Ring... Ring... Ring!

“...Brother, you really are too incredible.” I was so moved that I hugged my brother and shook him violently. Then, I pressed down the phone key to receive the phone call.

Lolidragon’s voice immediately rang through the room and shook the heavens. “Is the pig-headed Prince here?”

“Hey, aren’t you forgetting to ask if I’m here or not?” Hearing the voice of the woman of his dreams, Yang Ming immediately rushed to the front of the phone and complained resentfully.

“Go away. I have life-threatening matters to discuss with Prince.” Lolidragon shoed him away without any mercy.

Lolidragon is actually saying that she wants to “discuss” things with me? This is definitely not going to be good. I gulped and asked, “What is it? Other than asking me to seduce Long Dian, anything is fine.”

“Go to hell. If seduction were needed, then it would be me, the D cup, who went. You? Little girls should stay out of the way.” Lolidragon made a cutting remark that was the epitome of her ability to be harsh.

I lowered my head to look at my own A cup and then bitterly said, “What’s inside is what counts for women, okay?”

“Hmm, D cup!” Yang Ming produced a notebook out of nowhere and recorded Lolidragon’s D cup with all his effort. He even added as a side remark, “Sis, you are an A- cup, not an A cup, ok?”

“Yeah, what’s inside is important, and that is a D cup.” Lolidragon casually gave me the final attack.

“Did you come here to compare cup sizes or to ask me for help?” I gritted my teeth and asked.

“Oh, that’s right.” Lolidragon suddenly returned to being serious. “We have managed to chase down Long Dian, and that fellow has already seized complete control over the Dictator of Life. Right now, the entirety of Second Life has fallen into Long Dian’s hands and our company simply has no way to enter.”

“Sunshine and Kenshin?” I suddenly thought of the two of them. *Didn’t Lolidragon say that we could download the two of them to another place?*

“Stuck in Second Life. What happened was too abrupt. We were completely unable to make it in time to save them...” Lolidragon’s voice trailed off.

Sunshine and Kenshin are stuck inside? No way, I want to go and save them! I jumped up and held onto the phone violently. “Where is Long Dian? Didn’t you say that we have managed to track him down?”

“You and Wu Qing go to the nearest instant transmission station immediately and use it to come over to the one closest to our headquarters. I have already told the others over the Internet and they have arrived one after another. Hurry up and come. We’ll be waiting for you for an hour. After one hour, we have no choice but to depart. Otherwise, Long Dian might change his stronghold. Did you hear that, Prince? One hour...” Lolidragon said urgently.

One hour! I immediately grabbed the back of Yang Ming's collar and then, with one foot kicking open the house door and one hand scooping up the keys, I jumped onto my mom's custom-made hover bike. I stuck the key into the keyhole and started the engine...

"Sis, have you driven a hover bike before?" Yang Ming asked shakily.

I used both of my hands to tie my hair into a ponytail, and then I put on a windbreaker and a pair of goggles. Without even turning around, I asked, "Yang Ming, which side is the accelerator and which side is the brake?"

"You, get off the bike!"

"Ah, I found it." *So the right side is the accelerator! Let's accelerate!*

"No, no, no, I don't want to meet an early demise while in my prime~~"

Under Yang Ming's constant howling, I drove the hover bike toward the transmission station. Second Life's headquarters were in the capitol and the transmission station nearest to my house required around forty-five minutes of driving to reach. Then, I'd have to spend another ten minutes transmitting over to the capital and drive for another fifteen minutes in order to reach downtown... And this was still under the conditions that there were no delays, no red lights, and no queuing at the transmission station.

"Sis, there's a red light!" Yang Ming shouted wildly.

"Charge!"

"Sis, there's a traffic jam!"

"Weave through it!"

"Sob, sob, sob, the Feng family is going to die out. Dear dad and mom, your unfilial son has let you two down."

Inside Second Life's headquarters...

"I didn't think there would be a day when I would actually cooperate with you." Zhuo Ling Bin said unenthusiastically. He was extremely discontented with this fellow, but he did indeed have some very good capabilities. Even though Min Gui Wen had never touched a computer before, he could still think of a trap to ensnare Long Dian... He could not help but admire him.

“For Prince.” Min Gui Wen had also pulled a long face. With the exception of Prince, no one else could make him reckless.

“You guys, go outside to choose your equipment.” Lolidragon... No, she should be called Long Shui Han, the chairman of Second Life’s only daughter, walked into the room.

“Shui Han, must you really go personally? That lad, Long Dian, is extremely difficult to deal with. I’m afraid that this time the risk is very high.” A robust adult in his fifties asked worriedly.

“Dad, I must go personally. This matter is caused by Long Dian-biǎogē, so I definitely have to deal with this personally.” Long Shui Han’s fist clenched and then relaxed repeatedly. If it weren’t for her foolish wishes in the past, Long Dian-biǎogē wouldn’t have designed Second Life, and he wouldn’t have created so much disaster... Though she couldn’t think of a reason why the gentle Long Dian-biǎogē from the past would become like this.

“But, darling, Father will be worried about you.” Long-bà¹⁴ suddenly abandoned the dignity of a chairman and pulled at his daughter’s sleeve with a pitiful face.

Long Shui Han cast a cold glance at her father. Once her killer gaze had sent him to the corner to hide, she gestured for Zhuo Ling Bin and Min Gui Wen to follow her. They walked all the way to the lounge area, where Long Shui Han revealed a grim smile and pointed at the various weapons one-by-one.

“Light defensive armor set. Not only does it increase your defense, it also has the effect of increasing your agility. After putting it on, you would be able to do various kinds of high difficulty movements that you usually wouldn’t be able to do.

“Power gloves. As the name implies, it increases your strength by a lot. Breaking a few walls isn’t really a tough matter with these.

“Bouncing boots. After wearing them, your jumping abilities are guaranteed to improve by leaps and bounds. Powerful people can even use them to jump over ten meters high.

“Ray gun. You can shoot ten rays in one second.”

“My index finger has never moved ten times or more in a second.” Min Gui Wen coldly interrupted Long Shui Han’s “wishful thinking.” He even added, “Moreover, I have never fired a gun before.”

“Uh, it’s possible in theory.” Long Shui Han embarrassedly explained, “These are weapons that are given to the Special Forces. It took me a lot of effort to get a hold of them. Oh, that’s right; there’s also the lightsaber. You can also use a sword.”

¹⁴ “**Long-bà**”: bà means father.

“Sigh, if you give a gun to someone who doesn’t know how to use it, no matter how good the gun is, it would be of no use.” Min Gui Wen shook his head.

Bang. Bang. Zhuo Ling Bin managed to fill the gun’s energy with little effort. After inspecting whether or not the gun was in good condition, he raised the gun with his right hand and fired without any hesitation. More than ten meters away, the shattering of bonsai pots answered to him one-by-one.

After Min Gui Wen shut his wide-open mouth, he coldly made a cutting remark. “Are you a terrorist? Your gunmanship is so accurate, killing a few people shouldn’t be a problem, right?”

“What do you think?” Zhuo Ling Bin stroked the gun and glared at his love rival with a dangerous gaze.

“Hehe, Prince-gēgē hasn’t even arrived yet, but Gui-gēgē and Wicked-gēgē have already become this rowdy.” A beautiful girl suddenly stepped into the entrance, elegantly and quietly. Following behind her was a male and a female. The male was wearing gold-rimmed glasses and appeared to be intellectual and shrewd. The woman, with long, soft hair, appeared to be very classy.

Long Shui Han, Min Gui Wen and Zhuo Ling Bin looked at the three people questioningly. In the end Long Shui Han asked with furrowed brows, “Who are you?”

The girl pursed up her lips and smiled slightly. “I am Doll. You are Lolidragon-jiějie, right?”

“Doll? Oh my heavens, you really are...” Long Shui Han circled around Doll once and, after releasing one long breath, said, “You really are a princess.”

“Of course she is, don’t tell me that there are fake princesses?” The woman behind Doll pursed her lips and laughed.

Long Shui Han looked questioningly at the woman and, as though she didn’t dare to believe it, asked, “Yu Lian-dàsǎo?”

“Then, you must be Winter Triumph.” Min Gui Wen called the man’s name with a smile.

Yu Lian and Winter Triumph both nodded their heads, admitting their identity.

“As expected of a princess, you sure came quickly!” Long Shui Han clicked her tongue in amazement. *They probably used a personal transmission station to get here.* “You guys can also come over and pick your weapons.”

“I don’t think that’s a good idea. Doll also wants to go? It’s too dangerous. And being a princess, Doll wouldn’t know how to use weapons or have any fighting skills...” Halfway through Min Gui Wen’s saying this, he abruptly saw Doll hold up the ray gun of the highest caliber and remove the safety with a few swift moves. She even showed an expression of admiration at the gun.

“Nice gun, Lolidragon-jiějie.” A glint of light shone in Doll’s eyes. “Too bad there’s no time. Otherwise, I could do a few modifications to give this gun the ability to release an even stronger ray.”

“...” Lolidragon and Min Gui Wen opened their mouths wide together.

Winter Triumph coughed twice and explained, “The princess has had to learn a variety of skills since a young age, including how to use a weapon to protect herself.”

Long Shui Han laughed stupidly and continued introducing the weapons. “This is a one-handed shield. Its area is only thirty by thirty centimeters. It is a small shield that is supposed to be installed on the left hand and can block various kinds of light energy.

“Okay everyone, hurry and put them on!”

“Are there any large sizes?” a rough and outspoken voice rang out.

“Wolf-gē!” Min Gui Wen happily shouted the name of the person.

“Has all of Odd Squad arrived?” Li Tian Lang was grinning from ear to ear.

“Wolf-gē!” Yu Lian cried out as she delved into the arms of Li Tian Lang as per usual, without even a moment’s hesitation.

“Yu Lian.” Li Tian Lang tenderly embraced the petite person in his arms. The two of them only looked at each other silently, wanting to carve each other’s appearance completely into their own hearts. Although this was the real world to the two of them, this was exactly the same as in Second Life.

“Prince hasn’t arrived!” Min Gui Wen frowned, his hopeful gaze plainly visible.

She won’t be able to make it on time. Zhuo Ling Bin understood this clearly in his heart. One hour was simply not enough time for Xiao Lan to rush over from her house. However, he didn’t say anything. He wished that Xiao Lan would not come... This was the real world, a world where one could get injured for real and could die for real. He wished that Xiao Lan would not take the risk, and he hoped that she would not receive any injuries!

Zhuo Ling Bin shut his eyes and then softly said one sentence, “I will help you bring justice to Long Dian.”

When Zhuo Ling Bin opened his eyes once again, he was shocked to find Min Gui Wen’s large face at an extremely close proximity. His heart thumped at that. However, he would not show weakness in front of Gui. Although he was shocked, he only narrowed his eyes slightly on the surface.

“What are you thinking about?” Min Gui Wen was extremely suspicious. To make Zhuo Ling Bin reveal an expression that says “I’m willing to sacrifice myself for you,” is definitely something that only Prince could do. However, seeing him show that kind of expression now made Min Gui Wen feel that something was extremely wrong. Could it be that Prince... will not be coming?

“None of your business.” Zhuo Ling Bin tilted his head away. He also didn’t want to let Xiao Lan meet with this fellow... even though they saw each other in class every day.

Although he was worried, Min Gui Wen was unable to do anything about Zhuo Ling Bin. Should he use his “Professor” status to force this “student” to submit? Forget it, if Zhuo Ling Bin were to call him Professor, then even the sky would fall down.

Min Gui Wen immediately turned toward Long Shui Han. “Prince will come, right?”

“Is there any possibility that that guy won’t come?” Long Shui Han replied, displeased. Prince had left the house without even having time to hang up the phone. How could Prince not come?

“Prince hasn’t arrived yet?” A sharp and clear voice sounded.

The crowd all turned their heads to see who had spoken, only to see a boy who was not tall, and even appeared to be somewhat cute, walk over. Who was this?

“Could it be that you are Ming Huang?” Min Gui Wen struggled to find a possible candidate in his mind. In the end, he could only come up with this conclusion.

Zhuo Ling Bin gave Min Gui Wen a cold glare and said sarcastically, “That’s strange. As the ‘elder brother’ of Ming Huang, I actually don’t recognize this person who is in front of me as my ‘younger brother.’” Though he had to admit, the boy in front of his eyes did indeed have a similar feeling to Ming Huang.

“No, I’m not Ming Huang.” The boy gave a small smile and then directly announced the answer. “I’m Nan Gong Zui.”

...

Long Shui Han barely managed a reply, “You are Nan Gong Zui? What proof do you have?”

The boy was stunned for a moment. *This actually requires proof?*

“Then very well, let me ask you. Who is your sworn enemy? Who is your most precious person? What is Prince’s most famous characteristic?” Long Shui Han asked earnestly.

“My sworn enemy is Fan, the most precious person to me is my god-sister, Ice Phoenix, Prince’s most famous characteristic is...” The boy frowned and hesitated before he asked, “I don’t know whether you are referring to his fondness for eating, his stubbornness, or his being directionally-challenged?”

Pretty much all of them... The people thought in their hearts.

With great alarm, Long Shui Han shouted, “You really are Nan Gong Zui! Goodness, the world is really full of extraordinary things! How could someone manage to transform from a cool, handsome guy to a cute boy?”

A helpless expression appeared on Nan Gong Zui’s face and, somewhat embarrassed, he replied, “I only made myself taller and my face a little sharper in the game... And all of you, don’t judge me by my appearance. Actually, I’m already twenty-five years old and am much older than Prince.”

“Twenty-five years old? Heheh...” Long Shui Han smiled laughingly, for the person in front of her looked completely like a fifteen year old. “Regardless, you also have to get equipped with weapons for there is not much time left.”

Nan Gong Zui nodded his head, and then went up to equip himself with weapons and armor. The extent of his familiarity with them was as though he wore them every day.

Min Gui Wen couldn’t help but open his mouth to ask, “You have worn this stuff before?” *Why does everybody seem to be a terrorist who specializes in weapons and armor?*

“I’m a policeman!” Nan Gong Zui lightly said a sentence... that nearly made everyone’s jaw drop. *In this world, is there any policeman who looks less like a policeman than him?*

At this moment, there were still twenty minutes left before departure!

“Lolidragon? Are you Lolidragon?” Yet another person had just arrived. Everyone’s heads turned to look. It was a girl who appeared to be lively and full of vitality. However, at the moment, the girl’s face was extremely pale and her whole body was shaking non-stop. Her eyes were blood-shot and it was evident that she had been crying for some time.

“You are?” This time, Long Shui Han didn’t dare to carelessly guess the identity of the person in front of her eyes and only asked cautiously and timidly.

“I am Fairsky. Lolidragon, how is the situation right now? Has anything happened to Sunshine?” Fairsky desperately strung out a series of questions. Long Shui Han didn’t even have enough time to reply before Fairsky fell to the floor and questioned herself miserably, “Could it be, could it be that Sunshine is already... dead?”

Looking at Fairsky who seemed to be completely scared out of her wits, Long Shui Han turned pale with fright and she quickly clarified, “Fairsky, don’t think too much. Sunshine and Kenshin are still in Second Life. It’s just that Second Life has temporarily been sealed off, and thus we cannot go in.”

Once Fairsky heard that, she anxiously raised her head to ask, “Really? Will the Dictator of Life and Long Dian hurt them?”

“No, definitely not!” Long Shui Han replied confidently. “The Dictator of Life would definitely not hurt his own companions.”

“Th-then that’s good.” Fairsky wiped her tears away. She stood up from the floor and regained her original strength. She shouted, “I want to go with all of you together. I also want to go save Sunshine.”

“Sure!” Long Shui Han replied firmly and pointed at the equipment. “Go change into the equipment then!”

Fairsky equipped everything without a single word.

“... I’m also coming along,” a cold voice drifted over. “No need to ask. I’m Cold Fox.”

Everyone turned toward Cold Fox and, though he was still wearing a high school uniform, by this time everyone had already become used to seeing one another’s strange appearances. Lolidragon also only pointed to the equipment. “Wear them!”

Cold Fox didn’t say another word. After putting on the equipment, he slowly picked the weapon that was handiest for him.

At this moment, there were still ten minutes left before departure!

Everyone put on Long Shui Han’s carefully prepared equipment one after another. Min Gui Wen was putting them on and glancing at the door repeatedly, only hoping that he would appear, that white-haired boy that showed up even in his dreams... Of course, in real life, Prince would probably not be white-haired.

“Time’s up, let’s go.” Long Shui Han counted down using the clock on the wall, all the way until the second hand faithfully jumped to the next dot. One hour had passed, and even she couldn’t do anything about it. She could only tell them to set off. Why hadn’t that guy arrived yet?

“Wait, wait, Prince hasn’t come yet!” Min Gui Wen shouted anxiously.

“We must depart within one hour. This is what you yourself had said, right?” Long Shui Han stated calmly. She definitely couldn’t let Long Dian-biǎogē escape and then cause even greater harm... Having the Dictator of Life, this super-computer, in his hands, was too dangerous.

“Yes...” Min Gui Wen had no choice but to admit it. His mind told him that he couldn’t postpone it any longer, but, but Prince...

“Let’s go!” Long Shui Han voiced out this sentence.

“Daughter, be careful!” Long-bà bid farewell, brushing away his tears with a handkerchief. He then said seriously, “That child, Long Dian, I’ll leave him to you.”

“I know. Relax Dad; I’ll capture Long Dian-biǎogē and bring him back.” Long Shui Han turned her head toward her father to make her guarantee. Then she led everyone to sit in her hover car. After that, the joyride began.

With a beautiful turn, they exited the parking lot. Long Shui Hank pushed the accelerator to the floor and they shot out like lightning!

“Lolidragon, go slower!” The people sitting in the back seats were swaying from side-to-side and were so frightened that their hearts nearly jumped out. Of course, they couldn’t care less about what Lolidragon’s real name was and could only desperately shout for her to stop until their throats hurt!

“I’m already going very slowly!”

“Sigh, my precious daughter’s driving skills are still this good!” Long-bà sighed in admiration. “The race car and racing track that I bought for her to play with in the past sure haven’t been wasted! “Long Dian... Sigh, I’ll leave that boy to my precious daughter to deal with.” Long-bà turned around and was about to go deal with official business that had piled up like a mountain...

The sound of glass shattering suddenly came from behind. No, one should say the sound of glass exploding! Their company’s shop front was a large piece of bulletproof glass over twenty meters wide that stretched from the ceiling to the floor. Long-bà had very clearly heard that same piece of glass make a heroic sacrifice.

“A h-hover bike?” One of the employees shouted, mouth wide open in shock.

Long-bà calmly turned around and didn’t bother to tend to the noise from the employees in the lounge. He leisurely sized up the hover bike that had crashed through the bulletproof glass. On top of it sat two people. As for the rather handsome boy sitting in the back, who had turned pale with fright, his lips purple, Long-bà decided to ignore him for now.

However, the person sitting at the driver’s seat was an interesting character. It was someone in a dashing windbreaker and a pair of durable jeans, with long hair tied into a ponytail and goggles on the face... A girl!

Long-bà gave an “Ah-ha!” for he knew the identity of the person who had arrived. Didn’t this just happen to be his spokesperson for Second Life? Second Life’s only... What did the youngsters call it? Right, trans!

“Where’s Lolidragon?” The handsome girl asked anxiously.

“Take this.” Long-bà took out a disk-shaped item. “See the green dot on the tracking device?”

The girl nodded her head, seeming to understand but actually not understanding it at all.

“You know, that is the person that you want to find. They have just set off, so you should take the chance right now to hurry and chase them. Who knows, you might be able to catch up with them not too long after they reach their destination.” Long-bà instructed with goodwill.

The female received the tracking device and threw it to the male on the back seat. Then, as she restarted the engine, she instructed the guy, “Yang Ming, you keep an eye on that disk and tell me where to go.”

With yet another beautiful turn, the girl flew out of the broken glass that was all that remained of the extensive windows. Before she vanished completely, she even gave Long-bà a salute. “Thanks, gramps.”

“Looks like I may have been wrong. With that speed, she might even be able to catch up to my daughter, who only knows that the accelerator has to be stepped on all the way down.” Long-bà looked admirably at the hover bike.

What a natural and unrestrained girl. No wonder she was able to charm the masses of males and females as a trans person. Long-bà shook his head. “Too bad I only have a daughter. Otherwise I would really want to have this girl as a daughter-in-law. What a pity...”

“Yang Ming, which way do we go?” I asked in a hurry. *That damned Lolidragon. Would it have killed you to wait for me? I was only three minutes late!*

“Go straight until the three-road junction ahead and go onto the road to the far right,” Yang Ming shouted into my ear as he clung on to me for dear life.

“Ok!” I turned the accelerator once again. *Dash!*

“Sob, sob, sob, Mom, why did you customize your hover bike for no reason at all? This speed is even faster than a race car!” Yang Ming wailed in anguish behind me.

After a little while, I asked continuously in a panic, “Yang Ming, have we caught up?”

“Whether we can catch up or not is secondary. Sis, the police are catching up!” Yang Ming hollered, and the ear-piercing sirens started ringing in my ears too.

“Humph!” *Even the police can't stop me from teaching Long Dian a lesson! I laughed coldly. How could the police catch up with my mom's meticulously modified, unequalled hover bike? My mom even named this bike Lightning while feeling pleased!* I looked at the speedometer. *Two hundred and twenty kilometers, and this hover bike's maximum speed is three hundred and fifty kilometers. There is still a lot of room to speed up!*

“Sis, what do we do?” Yang Ming shouted anxiously.

“It's fine, Mom ‘forgot’ to install her license plate!” *Meaning that we'll be fine as long as they don't catch up!* I hammered the accelerator once more and was satisfied to see the speedometer pointing at two hundred and fifty!

“Lolidragon, there seems to be police cars?” Li Tian Lang frowned, for he seemed to have heard the sound of sirens.

“Relax, once they see the license plate clearly, they'll leave.” Long Shui Han wasn't scared at all because, due to her father's abuse of authority, this car's license plate number was already well known among the whole police force. They wouldn't come and arrest her!

Hearing this, Nan Gong Zui couldn't refrain from raising an eyebrow.

“Huh? They don't seem to be chasing us.” Doll turned her head to look in curiosity. “They're chasing a bike and that bike is really fast. They've almost caught up to us!”

“What?” Long Shui Han looked into the rear view mirror, extremely pissed off. As expected, there was a bike chasing them at lightning speed.

“Humph, you want to ‘race’ with me? You’ve picked the wrong person.” Long Shui Han gave a cold smile, and then reached down to press a red button. The body of the car immediately started changing, and on the trunk at the back there appeared something that looked similar to a rocket.

“A-Are we watching a car race?” Min Gui Wen’s face looked ashen.

“The distance between us and that bike is growing more and more...” Doll observed for a while and then gave a cry of shock, “Ah, they caught up again. Eh? The appearance of the bike has also changed!”

“What? So it turns out that they are also an expert!” Although she knew that she had a mission, Long Shui Han couldn’t help but want to race her heart out. She pressed the accelerator even lower.

“Hey, you’d better be more careful! The princess is in your car!” Winter Triumph roared in anger. “If anything were to happen to the princess, rest assured that I’d ask your country for compensation!”

“If anything were to actually happen to Doll, do you think that you, being in the same vehicle, would come out unscathed enough to ask for compensation?” Zhuo Lin Bin asked coldly.

“Eh? That person sitting in the back who is waving to us... appears to be Feng Wu Qing-gēgē.” Doll observed the person in the back seat, who was scowling miserably, and waving his hand as though his life depended on it. His face was exactly the same as Feng Wu Qing-gēgē’s.

“What?” Long Shui Han was stunned. *Feng Wu Qing is on that bike? Doesn’t that mean that the other person is... Prince?* She slowed down a little so as to allow the bike to drive to her side.

“Ah, that really is student Feng Yang Ming, who is also Feng Wu Qing.” Min Gui Wen identified his own student without the slightest doubt.

If Feng Wu Qing is in the back, then who is the reckless driver that is throwing away his life? Everyone wondered.

“Lolidragon, don’t stop the car, just rush straight to Long Dian!” The driver shouted wildly.

“No problem, Prince!” Long Shui Han happily shouted back. *This guy still managed to make it in time!*

It was Prince!

Chapter Extra: The Long Family's Undisclosed Secret

“Xiao Han Han, this is your older cousin. His name is Long Dian,” Long-bà said as he suddenly brought back a boy she didn't know.

“My older cousin?” The ten-year-old Long Shui Han frowned. *How could I just suddenly have a cousin pop out of nowhere? If I must have a cousin appear out of nowhere, it should at least be a younger cousin; I don't want to be the youngest one. Besides, this cousin looks so skinny and small. He doesn't look anything like an older cousin.*

“Xiao Han Han? Call him Biǎogē,” Long-bà reprimanded, a bit displeased. “Xiao Long Dian has already lost his parents, so he will be living with us from now on. Be nice to him, okay?”

“Oh okay, I understand,” Long Shui Han replied reluctantly.

“Very good, now show Long Dian to his room. It's the one next to yours.” Long-bà said, nodding his head in satisfaction.

Sigh. Like this, my older brother can probably rest in peace now, right? Long-bà thought. He recalled the past, when his brother had refused to follow the family's arrangements of marrying another business magnate's daughter and had dated a poor girl in his school instead.

Sigh, Father was stubborn as well. He just wouldn't yield. No matter what, he wouldn't allow Dàgē¹⁵ to marry that girl. It was also due to this that Dàgē ran away from home. The family hadn't heard from him since then. Father was obstinate; even then he still wouldn't let us look for any traces of Dàgē. It was only when Father had passed away that we started looking for Dàgē, under Mother's orders. But before we could find him, Mother had already passed away. Not being able to see Dàgē even at her deathbed became one of Mother's regrets when she died.

However, this made him even more determined to find his brother. No matter what, his brother at least needed to burn incense at Mother's grave and pay his respects to her.

There had been no news of his brother... until last week. Yet the long-awaited news of his brother ended up being a report of his death. Three years ago, both his brother and that girl died during a car crash. They left a child behind, a poor child that was thrown around like a ball from relative to relative on the girl's side.

Long-bà shook his head. *Those shameless relatives! It's so obvious how they were treating him from the look of his thin and sickly body to his worn out, oversized clothes.*

¹⁵ “Dàgē”: Older brother.

Yet those relatives had dared to say that they would really miss Long Dian, making us... making us give them more compensation for their so-called loss!

Hmph, they're just a bunch of money grubbers, Long-bà thought in contempt.

“How old are you this year?” Long Shui Han asked grudgingly. *I want a younger brother!*

“I’m already twelve years old,” Long Dian said, nervously tugging at the corners of his shirt. He had never seen such a large and beautiful house before, not even when his parents were still alive. Not to mention, he had also never seen a girl more beautiful than the one who was standing before his eyes.

“Oh,” Long Shui Han replied, a bit displeased. *He really is older! How annoying!*

“We’re here. This is where you’ll sleep,” she said, kicking the door open and gesturing inside.

“Th-thank you...” Long Dian still couldn’t believe it. *This room is larger than Uncle’s entire house. Can I really live here?*

Seeing the boy fidgeting timidly, Long Shui Han felt quite annoyed. She complained, “What are you so scared about? The room isn’t going to eat you! How can you be my older cousin if you have no guts?”

“Sorry,” Long Dian said looking down, ashamed.

Long Shui Han felt like she was going to go crazy. “Don’t say sorry! Children from the Long family never say sorry to others! Not even in death!”

(Prince: ...Lolidragon, you’re only ten years old and you’re already setting such a bad example...)

“S-sorry,” Long Dian apologized, so scared that he straightened up, his body rigid. “I won’t say sorry ever again.”

“Good, follow me from now on. Jiějie¹⁶ has your back,” Long Shui Han said confidently while patting her chest.

Although he didn’t really understand what she meant, not to mention his confusion over her calling herself his big sister even though she was his younger cousin, Long Dian obediently nodded his head anyway. “Okay.”

¹⁶ “**Jiějie**”: Older sister.

“Barbaric kid! We don’t play with uncivilized children like you,” said a handsome boy. He was wearing a white swallow-tailed coat and was looking down at Long Dian disdainfully and arrogantly. Even when saying such spiteful words, he said it with extreme elegance.

“S-s-sor...” Long Dian looked down at the boy’s perfectly polished and spotless white shoes. Another apology had come out of his mouth even though he hadn’t done anything. Long-shūshu¹⁷ hadn’t wanted him to feel lonely, so he had specially organized a little dance party, inviting many guests that were the same age as him so he could make friends. *But... this action... seems to have initiated the opposite effect...*

“You’re not allowed to say sorry!” shouted an infuriated Long Shui Han who had witnessed this scene. She had only walked away for a bit and her cousin was already getting bullied! *Sheesh! This is the Long family’s domain! If he were to go to another person’s house, then he’d be bullied to the point of getting bashed up!*

“Biǎomèi!¹⁸” Long Dian exclaimed, happily lifting his head up toward her. His eyes were filled with the same emotions as that of Lois when she was being saved by Superman.

After rolling her eyes at Long Dian, Long Shui Han walked up to the boy in the swallow-tailed coat. Hands on her hips, as if she were a tigress condemning him, she demanded, “Young Master Chen, if I may ask, do you have something against my OLDER COUSIN?”

Young Master Chen didn’t even feel a bit like he was being interrogated for a serious crime. He put forth an elegant smile, believing that his looks could definitely mesmerize the girl in front of him. She was a rich, young heiress who would one day come into an incomprehensibly wealthy inheritance. Even though there was an age difference of seven years between them, the inheritance would make up for everything. In addition, a girl who could look so cute even when angry definitely wouldn’t look bad in the future.

After considering all of this, Young Master Chen gracefully and politely replied, “Long-xiǎojie¹⁹, I haven’t seen you for a long time. You have become even more beautiful than before.”

Unfortunately for him, a ten-year-old girl is clueless toward such romantic endeavors. Feeling disgusted, Long Shui Han stuck out her tongue and then dragged Long Dian away and ran. She even managed to make a face full of mockery at him as she left.

After leaving the party, Long Shui Han angrily pointed and shouted at Long Dian, “What the heck are you doing? How could you just let him call you a barbaric kid!? You’re my older cousin, you know!”

¹⁷ “Long-shūshu”: Uncle Long.

¹⁸ “Biǎomèi”: Younger female cousin.

¹⁹ “Long-xiǎojie”: Miss Long.

“I...” Long Dian lowered his head, ashamed. He wasn’t qualified to be Long Shui Han’s older cousin. Weak and cowardly, he was nothing like that older boy just now, who had possessed such an air of elegance. In reality, up until now, he had always suspected that maybe Long-shūshu had mistaken him for someone else. How could he possibly be a part of their family?

“You make me so mad!! Next time, I won’t care about you anymore!” Long Shui Han was so infuriated that her face flushed bright red.

Long Dian lowered his head. *Yeah, it would better if Biǎomèi didn’t care about someone like me anymore. What if I influenced her and she became like me...*

He suddenly noticed two small drops of water falling down his face, bitter and sour... It had been so long... so long since he had last cried. Since his mom and dad’s funeral, he had never cried again.

Originally, Long Shui Han had only been venting out her frustration and didn’t know that she would really cause her cousin to cry. She couldn’t help but panic. She hurriedly patted her cousin’s back, trying to comfort him, “D-don’t cry! I didn’t shout at you on purpose! Ahh... Please don’t cry, okay...?”

“Wuu... Wahhh...” It would have been better if she hadn’t tried to comfort him, because once she had done so, it made him remember his mom. In the past, whenever he cried, his mom would always be by his side patting his back and comforting him... Long Dian couldn’t stop himself from crying and wailing even harder.

Even though Long Shui Han was known to be fearless, her ten-year-old self couldn’t help but feel shocked and helpless at having an older boy hold onto her, crying. She didn’t know what to do. Had her words been that ruthless? After all, they had caused her cousin to start crying nonstop like Niobe!²⁰

As Long Dian bawled his eyes out while hugging Long Shui Han, who sat unmoving like a rock, so shocked that she didn’t dare move, Long-bà quietly stood by the door. He heaved a sigh and said, “Being able to cry is good, much better than enduring it and not shedding any tears at all. The latter would make me worry much more.”

“I...I really miss my parents...” Long Dian couldn’t stop himself from wailing.

Hearing that, Long Shui Han’s eyes became watery. She really missed her mom as well, but her mom had passed away from an illness when she was five. No matter how much she tried, she couldn’t even remember what her mom looked like. Mouth quivering and eyes growing warm, Long Shui Han followed along as she cried out loud, “Mommy... wahhh... Shui Han wants her mommy too...”

²⁰ “...crying...like Niobe...”: Niobe is a figure from Greek mythology whose children were slaughtered. She is known for weeping unceasingly for her children.

In the end, the two big little children held each other and cried their hearts out. They continued until they felt so tired that they fell asleep on the lawn, thus making Long-bà, who was getting along in years, carry them back to their beds, nearly twisting his back in the process!

The eighteen-year-old Long Shui Han quietly walked into the study room. Like a thief, she tiptoed stealthily to the side of the chair where someone was sitting. She breathed in deeply and yelled, “BOO!”

The man sitting on the chair visibly shuddered from the abrupt attack. Then, a handsome face, which noticeably had not stabilized from the fright, turned around. However, he didn’t even seem the least bit angry. Instead, he casually laughed, “Shui Han, you’re playing tricks on me again.”

Long Shui Han stuck her tongue out at him, unhappily asking, “Dian, what are you doing again? Isn’t it boring always sitting here staring at the computer?”

“Not at all. I’m currently designing a game!” said Long Dian, lightly pushing up the glasses sitting on his nose.

“Designing a game? The old fashioned you who has never done anything fun in his life?” stared Long Shui Han, dumbfounded. She couldn’t believe that the guy that wouldn’t play any online games, even when she tried coercing him through force and bribery, would actually want to design a game.

It’s because you like playing games, he thought to himself secretly. He smiled, saying, “Aren’t you constantly whining that games aren’t realistic enough and that their gameplay is unfulfilling? I want to design a game that has a realism level of 100% for you to play. If you have any suggestions, fire away. I will definitely make it meet your expectations.”

Long Shui Han’s eyes immediately started shining, “Really? Let me see, let me see!”

Long Dian couldn’t help but laugh out loud. “This is only a plan. I can’t possibly design a whole game by myself. I’m planning on proposing this idea to Uncle. I hope that he can financially support me on this so that I can gather professionals to complete this game.”

“Oh, Dad you heard that right? A game with a realism level of 100%!” Long Shui Han turned around to find Long-bà already standing with a smile behind the two.

“A game with a realism level of 100% is too dangerous!” Long-bà said a bit regrettably. He had always known that Long Dian had a talent for programming and he also knew

that Dian-er²¹ wasn't someone who would exaggerate his skills. He had no doubt at all that Long Dian would be able to do it. Especially if it was for Shui Han, he would definitely put in his best effort and accomplish it at all costs.

“Dad~. Let Biǎogē do it. I really want to play such a game!” Long Shui Han persistently whined cutely at Long-bà while shaking his arm.

Long-bà smiled involuntarily, “Of course I wouldn't stop Dian-er from doing this, I only hope that he could lower the realism level a little, so that at least it's not 100%.” Long-bà sternly continued, “If the game is too realistic, I am afraid that many people wouldn't be able to differentiate between reality and virtual reality. That is really dangerous.”

Long Dian smiled, “I understand. I will decrease the realism level a little bit.”

“Awesome! So we're really making it?” Long Shui Han exclaimed excitedly, nearly jumping up and down in happiness. *Aren't I participating in the production of one of the grandest games ever then?!*

“What name should we give this game?” Long Shui Han hurriedly asked.

“I haven't thought of one?” Long Dian said a bit perplexed, “I wanted to wait until the game has been finished, and then think about it.”

“Yeah, yeah yeah! Let's give it a name along the lines of Dreamlike Fantasy!” Long Shui Han exclaimed dreamily while ignoring the dark looks of the two men. She was completely enchanted by the words “Dreamlike Fantasy.”

Seeing that his daughter had already entirely neglected the two of them who would be putting in their effort and money, Long-bà could only turn around and discuss with Long Dian. “What kind of world are you planning on depicting?”

“Hmm, maybe a futuristic realm?” pondered Long Dian.

“What?” Long Shui Han cried out in rejection. “Futuristic realm? Please, that stuff is so dull! Games should have magic, knights and a bunch of odd monsters to fight against! That way, a princess and her knight would be able to go adventuring together happily in the game world!”

As she talked more and more, Long Shui Han once again became immersed in her imaginary world. She was envisioning a place with green hills and clear waters where she would be in the same party as a prince. The two of them would defeat monsters on their romantic journey... *And of course this prince will be the ultimate bishie! He'll be*

²¹ “**Dian-er**”: The “er” part is an endearment that can be added to people's names, especially for children younger than the speaker.

extremely strong and cool, very considerate and it'll be even better if he knows how to sing! Then he could always sing love songs for me to listen to!

Long Shui Han sighed, “If there were such a person by my side, then I would really be able to die with no regrets.”

Long-bà and Long Dian both shuddered, drops of cold sweat dripping down their backs.

They then continued discussing, “Hmm... how many characters are you planning on allowing each player to create?”

“One. Definitely only one character. You absolutely cannot recreate your character,” replied Long Shui Han again as she turned around. *If they're allowed to make more than one character, then how would I know whether my prince on a white horse is cheating on me?*

Long-bà and Long Dian both displayed odd expressions. Long Dian scrunched his brows, “Not allowed to create another character? If it's like that, there may be many people objecting against it...”

“Or maybe there will be more people supporting it instead!” Long Shui Han resolutely answered. “Since the game's realism is practically 100%, then it shouldn't be possible to create another character; that is what it means to be realistic. This way, players will really be able to experience the feeling of reality.”

Long-bà and Long Dian felt a bit stunned. They lowered their heads, thinking about this one of a kind character system... *It really might attract more players.*

“Hehehe! This way, I can ensure that my prince cannot cheat on me or secretly train a new character. Wohohohoho!” Long Shui Han covered her mouth and laughed hysterically.

This was the main point... The two men looked at each other, laughing exasperatedly.

“Ah! Ah! I thought of an even better name for the game!” Long Shui Han suddenly shouted excitedly. The more she thought about it, the better the name sounded.

“What's the name?” asked the two men as they forced a smile.

Long Shui Han eagerly responded, “Let's call it Second Life!”

Second Life! Long-bà and Long Dian were blown away, totally astonished. *A second life huh? That is truly a great name!*

“Daughter, even you can spout out such good words once in a while!” Long-bà said, teasing her as he smiled.

“What!?! I always say good stuff!” Long Shui Han retorted. With her face reddening, she unhappily kicked her legs. “Dian!! Dad is bullying me again!”

Seeing this scene, Long Dian couldn’t help but smile. At the moment, he was truly blessed with happiness.

This year, Long Shui Han turned twenty-three years old and Long Dian turned twenty-five years old.

“My little cousin Long Dian~~” Long Shui Han smiled evilly using the tone that she would only use when trying to take advantage of him. She couldn’t resist asking, “How is the game progressing? When can I start playing?”

“One year. No, in half a year, you will definitely be able to play it.” Long Dian was clearly startled for a second, but then pretended like nothing had happened. He calmly stored away a piece of paper.

“Half a year?!” Long Shui Han was in disbelief. After hearing Long Dian say one year, she was already quite shocked because her dad had told her that they still needed at least two more years for Second Life to attain a realism level of 99%. *Yet now Long Dian is actually saying it will be completed in half a year?*

“Yes, half a year.” Long Dian said, eyes filled with determination. The amount of resolve in his eyes was so strong, it was scary. *It’s because I have no more time left*, he thought bitterly to himself.

“Dian... are you all right?” Long Shui Han was a little scared. The Long Dian that was usually so gentle was actually displaying such an expression. *His eyes seem to be exploding with wild ambition?* Although he was being very zealous, she was also a little frightened of him. She couldn’t shake off the feeling that Dian was really frightening when he was like this.

“I’m fine. It’s just that recently, I’ve been quite tired,” Long Dian smiled forcefully.

Hearing this, Long Shui Han seriously said in worry, “If you’re too tired, then rest for a bit. Listen to Dad. You’ve put in so much of your hard work and effort into this game, so if it’s impossible to complete it within half a year, then allowing it to be released a little later is all right. Don’t force yourself so much just because I’m always rushing you. You know I am half joking about it.”

“I know. Don’t worry. I won’t allow myself to collapse,” Long Dian said while clenching his fist, trying his best to keep his emotions under control.

“Good! Then, take care of your health!” Long Shui Han ordered before leaving.

“Got it!” Long Dian smiled in response as he watched Long Shui Han close the door behind her. The moment the door closed, Long Dian’s smile immediately disappeared. He buried his face into his hands, his heart only remembering the doctor’s painful words...

“It is a terminal illness; you only have one year left.”

“Is there really no medicine that can possibly save me? In this era where technology has become so advanced?” Long Dian couldn’t believe it. *An incurable disease? The kind of situation that only happens in Shui Han’s favorite soap operas is actually happening to me? This is really too laughably ironic...*

“Every era has illnesses that cannot be cured. As technology improves, new illnesses are constantly emerging... Believe me, I am the most knowledgeable doctor about your illness that you will be able to find,” the doctor said helplessly. “I didn’t want to answer you so mercilessly but I’d rather be cruel than allow you to waste the remaining time you have naively believing that you could be cured.”

Long Dian was silent for a long period of time. With both of his hands shaking uncontrollably, he asked, “Can you help me delay it for a bit longer? The things I need to do cannot be completed in the short period of one year.”

“With the assistance of medicine and the most advanced medical equipment, I will only be able to delay it for two years at the most.”

Sobs of pain escaped from behind the hands that were firmly pressed against his face. After a long time, Long Dian slowly raised his head, his composure restored. He turned on his computer and got absorbed back into frantic programming. *At least... I at least have to leave something behind for Shui Han...*

Long Dian stared at the computer screen, looking at the GFX team’s creation of the latest version of the AI administrator in the game... He lightly pressed a few buttons, changing the face to match his own appearance. He hesitated for a moment, but in the end he still chose to give this AI, who looked identical to him, the highest intelligence level possible.

“Maybe you can replace me and stay by Shui Han’s side?” Long Dian muttered to himself. He became more and more confused in his heart. *To think that I only have two years left to spend together with Shui Han and Long-shūshu...*

“No! You can’t replace me!” Long Dian roared. He agitatedly swept everything on his table to the floor. “I don’t want to leave them! I’ve only been with them for ten or so years! I want to continue to stay alongside them!”

“I need to think. Think of another way...” Long Dian kept murmuring to himself. Grabbing his health examination report from the table, he walked out, his body swaying. He kept mumbling, “I need to think of another way...”

The computer screen displayed a message: highest intelligence level completed at 50%, 60%...

“Dictator of Life, is there any way for me to continue living?” Long Dian questioned the computer screen reflecting the face of the Dictator of Life, the face that looked exactly like his. Toward this super artificial intelligence that Long Dian had unintentionally created... he had the utmost trust.

The ironic thing was that he was unable to make the same program again because the reason the process had finished was due to him carelessly sweeping the whole computer onto the floor. During that process, he had no idea what had been pressed or done to create this miraculous result. The Dictator of Life might possibly be the world’s most intelligent super computer. However, Long Dian even suspected that he wasn’t simply the most intelligent computer on this earth... the Dictator of Life was slowly becoming more and more human!

“Father, there are two ways.” The Dictator of Life responded to the question accordingly.

“Number one; freeze yourself and wait until medicine that can cure your illness is created.”

Long Dian impatiently waved his hand in rejection. What he desired was to be able to be with Shui Han and Long-shūshu. If he must wait an unknown number of years to defrost, only to find that Shui Han and Long-shūshu had long d... Then he might as well just die in the first place.

“Next.”

The Dictator of Life hesitated for a moment before speaking. “Number two; download your brainwaves into a certain place and store them there. To a certain extent, that is also considered living, right?”

Long Dian was greatly stunned. He blurted, “Store my brainwaves? Where?”

“Father, the game that you are designing right now is a very suitable place,” the Dictator of Life said with sincerity. “That place will be placed under my jurisdiction, correct? Father, you will be very safe there.”

Store myself inside the game? Long Dian’s fist tightened. Shui Han really likes that place too. If I were to stay there, would that count as staying by her side?

“How should I do it? How should I download my brainwaves into the game?” asked Long Dian agitatedly. As long as he would truly be able to continue staying beside Shui Han, then he would do anything, at any cost.

“There are a few methods...” The Dictator of Life suggested a few methods which he believed had considerable feasibility. One of them was the idea that once you enter the brainwaves onto the network, cut off the return path; this would mean directly killing the person’s body. This way, the brainwaves could, hopefully, be stored on the network.

However, after the Dictator of Life finished speaking, he worriedly added, “Father, these methods are only theoretical. You must not try this.”

“Need to experiment...” said Long Dian, who was a little out of it. He staggered out of the study room.

The Dictator of Life’s computer screen suddenly flashed, “Ah... I have just thought of another method... I guess I will tell Father about it next time.”

“Father can... merge together with me.”