# Doomsday Wonderland: Hyperthermal hell

*This is the keyword-rich,
attention-grabbing subtitle*

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# 1

Cinderella's Fear

"I think my boyfriend is planning to murder me."

It was the weekend, and the McDonald's they were in was filled with parents who had brought their children. There were also incessant shrills and laughter from the children that played on the slides in the play area. Naturally, it was difficult for the fair and plump Zhu Mei to believe what her good friend had said.

"That's nonsense! Even if both of you are fighting, don't talk smack about someone to that degree," Zhu Mei scolded jokingly. Pausing for a while, she raised an eyebrow before asking rather hesitantly, "When the two of you fight, it doesn't get physical, does it?"

The woman who sat opposite Zhu Mei was about 20 plus years old. Even though her features could be considered quite exquisite, in a bustling cosmopolitan city like theirs, she couldn't be considered a rare beauty. However, her most attention-drawing feature was her large pair of slightly upturned eyes. Within her light-colored pupils was an amber luster that you couldn't help but associate with expensive cats.

Lin Sanjiu shook her head and did not continue. She couldn't blame Zhu Mei for not believing her; saying such words seemed somewhat preposterous even to herself. Perhaps it was because she had not slept well, for she felt rather anxious. She took two sips of Coca-Cola, not knowing what frame of mind she was in. She half-jokingly said, "If a day comes when the police ask who I usually don't get along with."

"Sheesh!" The bantering tone of her friend relieved Zhu Mei of the shreds of doubt she previously had. She waved her hand and cheerily commented, "Really, you got a great deal! Say, what are Ren Nan's shortcomings?"

The last half of the sentence blew past her like a breeze, as Lin Sanjiu did not even listen. Her pair of cat-like eyes swept across the surroundings outside the window, her lower jaw slightly tightening.

Seemingly to conceal that action, she tilted her head down and took a bite out of her hamburger.

At that moment, the noisy McDonald's suddenly fell silent for a few seconds. As the doorway darkened, a tall man walked in at a steady pace. A few customers in the queue unconsciously stepped aside, opening a path for him.

Wearing a custom-tailored steel gray shirt, with a unique Armani slim-fit design, every detail seemed to portray dignified quality. His well-pressed dark-colored pants elegantly fitted him without any creases as if there were professionals that ironed it anytime. Additionally, he had a 1:9 body ratio that Asians rarely had and good looks to boot. At any time, Ren Nan looked like a top model who had just walked out of some fashion show… and right into a McDonald's. It was no wonder he was getting glances from the crowd.

As he sat down, there was a slight fragrance of Davidoff Cool Water cologne wafting in the air.

"Why are you eating fast food again?" He nodded in acknowledgement of Zhu Mei as he gently touched Sanjiu's hair as if not knowing what to do with her. His Patek Philippe watch was half buried in her hair. "I even planned to take you to that Japanese restaurant we went to previously."

"When I walked past, I just felt hungry, so..." Lin Sanjiu forced a smile, avoiding Ren Nan's gaze. She lowered her head and put a single french fry in her mouth. Her hair slipped from her shoulders, blocking the view of her expression.

Saying that Ren Nan had some sort of flaw seemed almost unimaginable.

After dating for a few months, Ren Nan had quickly won over her buddies and friends with his perfect demeanor, much less Lin Sanjiu herself. No, not only his demeanor; whether it was his looks, wealth, or personality, every aspect was so perfect. He was exactly what every woman dreamed of.

Everyone told her that fate treated her too well.

When they just started dating, Lin Sanjiu almost couldn't believe how lucky she was. At the time, she woke up smiling every morning, embracing the apocalypse world Ren Nan brought her.

When did she start feeling that there was something wrong?

Suddenly, Zhu Mei's enthusiastic voice broke her train of thought. "I have taken a day of Xiao Jiu's time, but I won't interrupt your sweet time together! She just told me that she was a little tired, why don't you both go back?"

Lin Sanjiu was pulled back to reality.

Ren Nan's gentle voice always had a fittingly cheerful tone. "Let us send you back. Recently, the weather has been too hot."

Zhu Mei, who had a childish temperament, immediately smiled, replying, "Oh, then I'll just have to take you up on that offer! It's so bloody hot today; I just walked for a while and now I am covered in sweat…" The clothes on her back were still damp.

As she did not have much of an appetite and also saw that her good friend had finished eating, Lin Sanjiu readily stood up. Her boyfriend and good friend followed suit and walked out of the McDonald's.

The pavement outside had been baked by the afternoon sun, as a wave of heat surrounded the three of them. It was already October, but the intense heat did not show any sign of retreating as it continued to hold their cosmopolitan city in its grip. Some of the people on the streets held umbrellas, and others' foreheads were covered with sweat. Everyone's face showed much discomfort — it was really too hot. Even at the height of summer, it wasn't that hot!

Zhu Mei was most afraid of the hot weather. She had only walked a few steps but was already covered in sweat and had to continuously wipe her forehead. Lin Sanjiu could feel several strands of her own hair sticking to the skin at the back of her neck. As she could not stand this unpleasant feeling, she couldn't help asking, "Where did you park your car?"

Ren Nan lifted his head and looked over to a location not far from them; his skin was clean and dry, with not even a bit of perspiration. "It's right in front." He paused for a while, keeping his usual elegant and calm demeanor. "I already told you a few times, not owning a car is too inconvenient. Since you have already gotten your driver's license, why don't we buy you a car?"

Zhu Mei immediately exclaimed enviously, "You plan to buy a car for Xiao Jiu? You really are a Mr. Perfect. My boyfriend only bought me a teddy bear for my birthday."

Lin Sanjiu replied superficially with a sound of assent while totally not thinking about the car. It was lucky that Zhu Mei was a lively person, for she chatted noisily with Ren Nan and he did not notice the unease that Sanjiu felt.

Three months before, Lin Sanjiu had finally sweetly agreed to Ren Nan's countless requests for her to move in. She packed her things, ended her housing rent, and moved to his condominium situated in the middle of the city. The many friends and colleagues who visited her new accommodation were all extremely envious. The moment they stepped out of the apartment, they would immediately pull her over and tell her, "Xiao Jiu, you must hold on to such a good guy!"

"Does Ren Nan have any brothers? Or friends who are still single? Don't forget to introduce one to me!"

"You should talk to him about marriage soon…"

Her friends' celebratory voices seemed to reverberate in her ears. The emotions and excitement in Lin Sanjiu's heart were ten times her friends'. However, after living together for some time, her IQ, which had lowered due to being in love, had slowly recovered.

She started to gradually notice the details of her daily life.

Right now, Lin Sanjiu really couldn't explain it, but she felt a little fearful of Ren Nan.

After Zhu Mei disappeared around the corner of the old street, Ren Nan restarted the engine and the sound of the car merged with the traffic. In about 20 mins, both were back home.

Ren Nan's condominium was located in the most expensive district, and its construction was only completed two years before. Every inch of tiling represented a kind of lifestyle that normal folks like Lin Sanjiu could only dream of. And now, she had almost gotten used to her new lifestyle — if not for the cloud of doubt in her heart that got heavier day after day…

The penthouse apartment occupied the entire 38th floor. Following the "ding" sound of their personal elevator, the door opened and both of them walked into the living room.

Responding to the movement of the elevator, the living room's soft lights switched on one by one.

"I bought some cola today, do you want a can?" Putting down her bag, Lin Sanjiu headed to the kitchen. She hid the thumping of her heartbeat and smiled at Ren Nan as if nothing happened, conscious of how her expression hid her feelings perfectly.

Ren Nan also walked over, wearing his usual tender smile. "Okay, whatever you buy is great."

She didn't know when it started, but this sort of fairytale-like sweet talk sounded strange to Lin Sanjiu. Totally not knowing how to reply, she hurriedly handed over the cola. Once he pulled open the can's tab, the gas in the drink came out with a "sss sss" sound. Probably to make her happy, he drank half the can of drink in one gulp.

Lin Sanjiu hid behind the opened fridge door. Her body tensed up as she perked up her ears, not wanting to miss a sound.

The room was silent for half a minute.

Seconds trickled by until Ren Nan's laughter broke the silence in the room. "What are you looking for in the fridge?"

Lin Sanjiu's heart fell into the pit of her stomach. She closed the door and acted natural as she observed Ren Nan.

No reaction.

Swallowing a can of cola full of carbon dioxide into his stomach, Ren Nan did not show any indication of burping. It was as if he had just drank a black pool of stagnant water.

"Nothing, I just wanted to see if there were any snacks." She forced a smile.

Living together for three months, she had never seen Ren Nan burp even once.

Not just burping — coughing, sneezing, farting, sweating… All these sorts of unsightly bodily functions that everyone had, Lin Sanjiu had never seen them in Ren Nan.

If she thought about it carefully, she was not sure if she had ever even seen him entering the washroom to using the toilet.

"You didn't eat much before. Why don't we go out for dinner tonight?" Ren Nan took both her arms and planted a kiss on Lin Sanjiu's neck.

Goosebumps surfaced all over her back. "Nah, it's okay. I am too lazy to move. Plus, I want to sleep early tonight since I have to wake up early tomorrow."

"Well, then I will personally cook you some salmon," Ren Nan replied smilingly.

Lin Sanjiu nodded her head quickly.

Ren Nan's cooking skills were like just him, perfect and flawless. After eating the dinner he had meticulously prepared, the sun outside the living room's glass windows slowly set to the west. As the sky darkened, it turned to a star-filled nightfall.

"There is an ongoing global heatwave. And today is the 104th day..." After clearing up the dinner utensils, Lin Sanjiu watched the television as if she was interested in the news. She honestly did not want to meet Ren Nan's gaze. "Following the deaths due to hyperthermia in Africa, India, and Southeast Asia, our country's death toll from the heat stroke has already reached 67 people. Relevant experts remind all..."

She felt Ren Nan walk over and sit beside her, the sofa sinking down.

An arm settled on her shoulder naturally, and Lin Sanjiu's body stiffened.

Even though she did not turn her head, she could feel that he wasn't watching the television.

# 2

Blistering Hot Night with a Steak

What was the difference between the temperature from midnight to 1 am?

If things continued on as usual, no one would probably feel it.

However, tonight was vastly different. The sun had long been set, but the temperature of the sweltering heat in the air seemed to rise gradually with each passing minute. And to make matters worse, it had been days since there was even a little wind. The surrounding air outside the windows was no longer just air, but suffocating, scalding hot air that was waiting to rush towards you.

As if someone had given an order, the small number of families in the city who, for various reasons, did not switch on their air conditioners, now also switched them on. Whereas the people without air conditioners simply could not tolerate it any longer. Pubs, 24-hour convenience stores, offices... Wherever there was a trace of cool air, they would go.

After 30 minutes, with a "Ke Da" sound, a few night lights in the 38th-floor apartment were extinguished. The room was plunged into absolute darkness. The constant soft buzzing sound in the bedroom had also unknowingly stopped at some point.

The central air conditioning had stopped.

After the air conditioner had stopped, Lin Sanjiu tossed frustratedly whilst asleep. Without the maintained temperature of a comfortable 26°C, her body was quickly covered in a layer of sweat. This layer of sweat was like an unbreathable blanket, and before long, she woke up due to the heat.

Ughh. The remote control seems to be on the bedside cabinet. A thought flashed past her hazy mind. Just as she was about to stretch out her hand to reach for it, she suddenly felt that something was wrong. She immediately stopped moving her hand. After remaining motionless for a while, she squinted slightly and peeked upward.

A snowy white face hung directly above her own. Two black, cavernous eyes stared straight at her.

Again! It's happened again! A loud screech exploded in Lin Sanjiu's mind; however, her throat was so dry, she couldn't even make a sound. Her heartbeat became faster and faster, louder and louder, and that white face leaned in close with his ear to listen. With swiftness, it came near Lin Sanjiu.

Two weeks before, she had once woken up in the middle of the night because she was thirsty. As she got up, she knocked into that face. At the time, she was so shocked that she yelped and scrambled to switch on the lights, only to find that it was Ren Nan.

She didn't know when Ren Nan had sat beside her with an expressionless face in the dark, how long he had been staring at her in this manner — just like tonight.

He explained to her that since he was young, he often sleepwalked.

If it weren't for her doubts, she would have believed him. She now forced down her fears and acted like she had just woken up. She rubbed her eyes and asked casually, "Ren Nan, are you sleepwalking again?"

In the dark, a smile cracked on Ren Nan's face. "Yes, it seems that I've done it again. I didn't scare you, did I?" He spoke totally articulately.

"A… a little…" Lin Sanjiu got out of the bed, almost as if escaping. She stood by the door, which gave her the false impression that she could escape anytime, so she calmed down a little. Only then did she feel the steamer-like temperature of the room. "Why is it so hot? Did you switch off the air conditioner?"

Ren Nan didn't say a thing. He pulled open the thick, heavy curtains, revealing the set of full-length windows. Normally, Lin Sanjiu could see the dazzling night scene of half the city through these windows. On this night, however, the city had lost its everlasting illumination. Even the starlight was blocked by the clouds, leaving only a dead darkness.

In the apartment with closed doors and closed windows, it was so stuffy that it was even hard to breath.

"The electrical load must be too high. It seems like there is a power outage throughout the city." There was still a cheerfulness in Ren Nan's voice that showed his composure. While he spoke, he slowly stood up, walked past the end of the bed and headed toward the door, step by step.

Suddenly, the alarm bells in Lin Sanjiu's mind rang. Without waiting for him to approach, she rushed towards the living room. She finally got some benefit from all the decorating and cleaning of this penthouse over these three months—in this pitch-black darkness, she succeeded in reaching the living room entrance. Without stopping to take a breath, she stretched out her hand and smashed the elevator button with a "bash".

Unexpectedly, it didn't light up red. There wasn't a backup power supply system in such an expensive condo?

"The backup power supply is only for the lights in the stairways. They couldn't care less for the lifts — even more so for personal ones." The voice came from behind her, a voice she had known for half a year. Ren Nan was just as gentle as before, but as he enunciated his words, Lin Sanjiu heard a wetness in his tone. It was as if… Ren Nan could not control the saliva secreting in his mouth.

In the dark, the shadowy, blurry outline that represented Ren Nan crept towards her, finally stopping in the middle of the living room.

Lin Sanjiu felt giddy. Her sixth sense had been right. A sense of regret welled up in her heart. "What… what are you going to do to me?"

"Your senses are quite keen." Ren Nan swallowed a mouthful of saliva. "You must have already felt it, right? But you really should have listened more closely to your intuition. Otherwise, you wouldn't have followed me back here. These past few days, you must have felt conflicted. I really should thank you for your trust."

Lin Sanjiu did not realize it herself, but her clenched fists were now trembling uncontrollably.

"Xiao Jiu, in such hot weather, have you been sweating a lot?" Ren Nan suddenly asked such a random question with concern.

Lin Sanjiu was stunned. She touched her arm subconsciously, finding that she only had a thin layer of perspiration on her skin. She started wondering why he would ask about this now.

Ren Nan nodded his head in a satisfied manner. "Xiao Jiu, you're great! I didn't groom you for half a year in vain…"

What the hell was he talking about? She did not understand a single thing he was saying. Lin Sanjiu wanted to open her mouth to say something, but she realized that her jaw was quivering. The thought that had been in her head these past few days made her say something she never thought she would say. "Are you going to… to eat me?"

"Your intuition is really sharp!" the black figure praised.

Lin Sanjiu was infuriated by his attitude. A complex mixture of fear, indignation, and bewilderment arose, and she did not feel as helpless as before. "Stop bullshitting! Who are you? Why did you choose me? Don't you dare try anything! All my friends know that I am staying at your place..." The words flowed out like a tidal wave.

She purposely raised her voice, secretly hoping that someone would be able to hear her as she felt her way to the open-concept kitchen at the side of the living room.

Ren Nan sighed. "On account of the fact that you have accompanied me for six months, I will explain things to you before you die." He raised his hands and snapped his fingers.

With a sudden "boom", one of the glass walls in the living room shattered into a thousand pieces. A wave of heat unlike anything Lin Sanjiu had ever felt before rushed passed the glass pieces and engulfed the room. This was accompanied by a muffled scream from a distance. The last bit of leftover cool air from the air-conditioner was swallowed in an instant.

"Why… why is it so hot?" It was as if someone had taken the entire city and roasted it over a barbecue pit! Before Lin Sanjiu could react, Ren Nan spoke in his gentle voice again. "From tonight onwards, this world is no longer the world that you people are familiar with. In this apocalypse world, according to your metric system, it is… oh… 56°C."

Lin Sanjiu was dumbfounded. At 56°C, normal humans would die a few times over due to acute hyperthermia and severe dehydration. With this sudden thought, she quickly touched the back of her neck. Unexpectedly, Lin Sanjiu did not really sweat much more.

"See! I only nurtured you for a few months, yet you already evolved and gained the 'Heat Resistance Adaptation' and 'Keen Senses' traits. Two traits... As expected of a potential seed I spotted right after I first saw you. Too bad, this apocalypse world came too early. Otherwise, I would have preferred to nurture you for two years before consuming..."

After the glass wall shattered, a dim light flooded the living room. With the aid of that bit of light, Lin Sanjiu could see Ren Nan's face clearly.

His usual handsome, model-like features gradually gave way to his large mouth, which kept getting wider and wider. Clear, bright saliva poured from the corners of his mouth without restraint, and at this time, Lin Sanjiu was already forced to the corner of the kitchen.

"I... I still don't understand! What sort of creature are you? Why do you want to eat me? I don't know what evolution or powers you are talking about. Didn't you say you would explain it to me? Then, tell me!"

Even if she could only delay him for one minute, it would give her a shred of opportunity! Lin Sanjiu shouted as she secretly stretched out her hand towards the knife holder on the countertop behind her.

His large mouth stopped for a while and then shrunk a little, revealing Ren Nan's original facial features again. "Sigh. Why are you so stupid? Of course, I am a human and Ren Nan is my name. However, I am not like your kind of "backward". I come from another "apocalypse world." Anyone who survives an apocalypse world will evolve and gain different abilities. I have abilities that you would never even dream of."

Ren Nan wiped his clammy chin. "You better put that knife down. I am warning you, my eyesight is really good. Just let me eat you obediently. I promise that it won't even hurt a bit."

"No way!" she shouted furiously. He barely even finished his sentence before Lin Sanjiu, filled with fear and anger, rushed towards him with a sharp knife in her hand.

The gleaming silver boning knife moved extremely quickly as it drew a bright light in the darkness. Just as the tip of the knife was about to pierce into Ren Nan's chest, he shifted a step silently. Lin Sanjiu missed her target. She staggered forward and slipped on a piece of glass. Unable to keep her balance, she fell heavily to the ground.

His large mouth, which almost tore his cheeks apart, lunged forward to attack Lin Sanjiu. He did not even give her the chance to stand up. In panic, she only managed to turn aside and fling out the boning knife. Ren Nan dodged quickly but still received a shallow cut from the knife.

With a crash, the knife fell some distance away.

Feeling angry and humiliated, Ren Nan pinned Lin Sanjiu to the ground and stared at her black pupils, which had shrunk to the size of a pinhead. "A steak should act like a steak!"

In the dim light, Lin Sanjiu watched in despair as the black figure closed in on her throat.

# 3

Card for Something, What Kind of Nonsense Is That?

REN NAN SANK HIS TEETH into the fresh tender flesh of the young woman. The smell of iron rust filled the air as his chin dyed red by her fresh blood. He only needed to bite down a little harder, and Lin Sanjiu's fragile life would forever disappear from this world.

But Ren Nan could not move. It wasn't that he did not want to eat this good progeny, but that he just wasn't able to move. There was a kitchen knife in the back of his head. Its blade was fully embedded, and only its handle remained in sight.

There was still a shred of excitement in Ren Nan's eyes — even as he died, he could not comprehend the situation. Lin Sanjiu was bare-handed, she was just struggling uselessly with her arms in the air. How could he just die like that?

For a while, Lin Sanjiu could only hear the intense drum-like thumping of her heart. "Ba-dump. Ba-dump." Her heart pounded as she laid under the heavy corpse. Overcoming the sharp pain in her neck, she used all her strength and finally pushed Ren Nan off. "Thump!" The corpse rolled off her and laid supine on the floor. With that, the knife in Ren Nan's head was pushed further in. The blade pierced through, revealing itself in his large, opened mouth.

Lin Sanjiu held her neck tightly. One of her hands was already covered in blood. She rapidly took in a few large gulps of air before giving a ruthless kick to the corpse on the floor. She cursed softly with her hoarse voice, "Who told you that I only evolved to attain two abilities?" She only muttered a few words, but the acute pain around her throat was too unbearable.

Just seconds after kicking the corpse, Lin Sanjiu's vision went dark. She almost fell — the dizziness brought by her loss of blood hit her faster than she thought it would. Everything else did not matter now. Right now, the most important thing for her was to bandage her wound. She staggered around to find a towel. When she found one, she placed it on her neck and applied heavy pressure to her wound. She gasped. She sat on the floor again and pressed the towel to her neck with all the strength she could muster.

After being in a state of half-consciousness for some time, the bleeding finally stopped. It seemed like it was not her time to die yet; after all, the bite missed her arteries. After she had rested for a while, she managed to accumulate enough energy to somehow stand up to get herself some water.

After she had put the glass of water down, she noticed that Ren Nan's bizarre-looking corpse was still lying silently on the floor.

After some consideration, Lin Sanjiu dragged her weakened self and stood beside the corpse. Trembling, she put one of the hands on the corpse and whispered hoarsely, "Store this."

Just as she finished her sentence, a white light flashed across her palm rapidly. The corpse, with a knife sticking out of it, disappeared. With a "pa" sound, a card that was the size of a poker card fell to the ground.

Lin Sanjiu felt for her mobile phone and used it to illuminate the card. Just as she expected, there was a simple squiggly crayon drawing of a man with a wide open mouth and a sharp knife sticking out of his head. There was also a row of blank words underneath it: *Ren Nan's Corpse*.

『Ren Nan's Corpse』

Name: Can't you read the card title?

Species: Human

Status: Dead

Potential Growth Value: 204

Murder Suspect: Lin Sanjiu

Passive Skills: Extreme Temperature Adaption, Strength Augmentation, Strength Augmentation Body Modification

Active Skills: Good for Me, You, and Everyone; Nutritionist

"What the hell is this?" Lin Sanjiu stared at the card, speechless for a moment. This weird item was produced by the third ability she had gained. Tonight, it just saved her life.

At will, Lin Sanjiu was able to transform items that she touched into a card and store them in her body. When she wanted to use an item again, she would only need to have that intention in her mind and the card would revert back to its original form in her hands.

When she threw the boning knife at Ren Nan before, it was only a ruse to lower his defenses. She actually killed him by putting her hand behind the back of his head when she was struggling as he bit her. With a quick thought, the [Chef's Knife] card that she had hidden in the morning reverted back to its original form and deeply pierced into Ren Nan's cerebrum.

After a few days of experimentation, Lin Sanjiu found out that she could only use this item transformation four times a day.

Even though the cards that she created no longer felt unfamiliar to her, this was the first time that she saw a card that showed such… rich content. She quickly flipped the card and, indeed, found that the back of the card was filled with tiny little words:

"Ren Nan, Male, 28 years old; he came from another 'apocalypse world'. He had been an introvert since young and was not popular with women. He once received a love confession from an older male schoolmate. When the apocalypse world arrived, he struggled to survive... You get the point. Anyways, after he arrived in the world belonging to the murder suspect, Lin Sanjiu, Ren Nan ate a multi-millionaire who had the potential growth value of 2. He took over the man's wealth and got close with the murder suspect, Lin Sanjiu, with hidden motives. Just when he was about to consume Lin Sanjiu, he was killed instead."

"It is frustrating enough that you don't reveal what you should, but you even labeled me as a 'murder suspect'?" Feeling a little gloomy, Lin Sanjiu ran her finger across the paragraph. The words disappeared, and the next paragraph slid in and appeared on the surface of the card.

『Good for Me, You, and Everyone』

You can spot a person with high potential growth value in a large population with your perception. Through intimate skinship (kissing, hugging, etc.), this ability is able to activate a normal human's potential, speeding up the party's evolution and allowing that person to gain their abilities more quickly. This is what's called a "win-win situation."

『Nutritionist』

After you finish consuming a person, you can efficiently inherit their potential growth value, evolved abilities, and body constituency. A balanced and nutritious diet will guarantee a better tomorrow.

**Note**: The knife in his brain was manufactured in Germany. It is sharp, lightweight and sturdy. $599. Purchased from Bloomingdale's Shopping Mall.

If she did not have her Keen Senses ability, she might think that this was just a dream. She cursed silently as she held on to [Ren Nan's Corpse], not really knowing what to do. She did not want to place a corpse into her body. After thinking about it for a while, she simply slid it into her pocket.

Ren Nan's card had clearly explained his abilities. She wondered if her own card would introduce her abilities and explain more about the so-called "apocalypse world". Even though this was her plan, she could not possibly transform herself into a card. With quick thinking, she plucked a strand of her hair and said quietly, "Store this!"

With a flash of white light, another card appeared on her hand.

[Hair]

Owner: Lin Sanjiu

Condition: Black, healthy, and a little dry on the ends

Function: It is annoying when it gets stuck on a broom.

Note: According to the condition of roots, the owner may start balding around forty.

*What the hell? It's totally useless.* Frustrated, Lin Sanjiu gestured with her hand in the air. A white light flashed, and the hair disappeared into the darkness. *Is this an apocalyptic world with a high-temperature climate?*

56°C It already felt unbearable for a person like her, who had evolved and gained Heat Resistance Adaptation. She wondered what it was like for other normal people.

Suddenly, she shuddered and jumped down from the sofa. Zhu Mei! How could she almost forget her friend? Thinking that Zhu Mei could be in danger right now, Lin Sanjiu ignored the fact that she was still injured. She searched hastily for a backpack and rushed into the kitchen. She stuffed all the bottled beverages and drinks she could find into the backpack. Then, after changing into a more comfortable sports attire, she searched for the keys for the emergency exit and ran into the dark stairway.

After she had run downstairs, she found herself quite breathless; it was 38 floors after all. She wiped the sweat from her forehead, drank a mouthful of water, and continued toward the basement.

Ren Nan's car, or rather, the car that belonged to the man he had eaten, was parked at basement 1. As Zhu Mei's apartment was a twenty minutes drive away, there was no way that Lin Sanjiu would choose to walk in such a high temperature.

Once she stepped into the parking lot, Lin Sanjiu was surprised by the heatwave that hit her. As she looked around, she switched off her phone's flashlight expressionlessly.

There was no need for a flashlight here.

At this moment, every single car here had its headlights on. All the cars had their engines running. The rumbling sounds of their engines assaulted the entire space as the acoustics in the parking lot amplified the noise by ten times. With hundreds of exhaust pipes spewing out hot air, the half sealed parking lot had truly turned into an oven that was at least 3°C to 4°C warmer than the outside temperature.

Everyone who could make it to the parking lot was here. Due to the power outage throughout the city, the people who could not endure the harsh temperatures naturally hid in their own cars where they could find working air-conditioners.

Barely walking just a few steps in this hot stifling space, Lin Sanjiu could feel that the clothes on her back were totally drenched with sweat. When she walked past each car, she could see the terrified faces of strangers behind every car window. Some of the people were continuously attempting to make calls while others were crying uncontrollably as they hugged their children. Some had already lost consciousness, perhaps because they were already dehydrated when they reached the parking lot. There were even some people who were staring at her flabbergastingly, apparently unable to understand how she still had the strength to walk around.

Despite the cool air in their cars, many people's faces were faintly shrouded in despair. The air-conditioners in their cars could only prolong their time. Once they ran out of gas or electricity, with the terrifyingly high temperatures outside their cars, there was little chance for survival.

Lin Sanjiu knew very clearly that she did not have the ability to help these people who were in their cars. She only had five bottles of mineral water, three cans of cola, and a few packets of plasters. With this amount of water, she did not know how long she would last. Gritting her teeth, she suppressed the sympathy she felt and concentrated on looking for the familiar Audi. When she did, she rushed into the car as if she was escaping.

She gave it some thought and decided not to switch on the air-conditioner. She only rolled down the car window. In any case, she would not die from the heat. At most, she would only feel some discomfort. She decided to save the precious gas and electricity for Zhu Mei. Lin Sanjiu wiped her sweat away, held on to the steering wheel, and drove the car slowly out of the parking lot.

Compared to the steamer-like environment in the parking lot, the 56°C temperature outside made Lin Sanjiu feel slightly better. The streets were empty. There were almost no cars on the road — likely because most people were unwilling to waste that electricity and gas.

The cars that were parked at the two sides of the road were like the cars at the parking lot. Their engines were switched on. The people within the cars also wore faces of fear and despair as they savored their last bit of cool air.

Just when Lin Sanjiu swerved passed a red Mazda, a sudden black shadow flew towards her from the left. With a low sounding "Bang!", it hit the Audi's door violently.

# Acknowledgments

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Derek Murphy