

48 Hours a Day

Chapter 13: Desert Island Survival VII

Zhang Heng looked at his character panel, and found that his skills had increased from two to three. But the mean evaluation at the bottom remained unchanged.

Since the lad in the shorts taught him how to make bow and arrows, Zhang Heng had another activity added to his days. He had carved out an area on the beach just for archery practice.

Using the knowledge imparted to him by Ed and the lad in shorts, Zhang Heng managed to overcome his plight finding food and water, and moved out of that bird-droppings filled cave into the clay house he had built with his worn hands.

Just as his life was improving, a new crisis soon emerged.

Ed had told him that the biggest enemy of a person who had mastered the skill of surviving the wilderness was not the ever-changing and unpredictable nature, but yourself.

Once a person's survival needs have been fulfilled, chances are, the person would fall into a vacant state; having lost all direction and motivation, being the only person on the island would soon bring on an overwhelming sense of loneliness.

Zhang Heng must find tasks to keep his mind and body constantly occupied so that he would not have the time to think about the fact that he was all alone on a deserted island.

When he was with the lad, Zhang Heng took into consideration that he needed to survive for another four hundred days and more, and set a new target for himself.

He decided to explore the heart of the island.

So far, his area of activity had been limited to the periphery of the island. The furthest he has been was to the virgin forest to look for firewood where he saw the fowl and some animal bones, which confirmed the presence of predators.

From then on, he had been very careful to limit his area of activity, staying away from that stretch of forest. After all, the resources on the beach were enough to keep him alive.

But now, in order to battle this terrible sense of loneliness, Zhang Heng needed a goal that would keep him going—exploring the center of the island and see what was there.

With this end in mind, Zhang Heng began to allow himself to be invested in it, and work hard towards the goal.

Taking into account that there were predators in the forest, he would first need to learn to protect himself.

His second companion had taught him to make two long-ranged weapons—the bow and arrows, and the sling.

The latter was easier, but the most difficult to use. The angle and timing at which the stone was flung had to be precise. If the sling was released a little too early or a little too late, you would find that the stone was miles away from hitting the target.

Hitting the target four or five times out of a hundred was not going to be easy.

On the other hand, bow and arrows are much more accurate and easier to control. With Zhang Heng already equipped with the basics of archery—the tips about posture, strength, and breathing technique that his coach had taught him, the only thing that he lacked was practice.

This was not something that could be done lackadaisically; it required the grind of time. In the real world, even though Zhang Heng had forty-eight hours a day, there was so much to do that he could not spend too

much time on a pastime. Now, on this island where he was the only human being, the thing he did not lack most was time.

Going from the recurve bow he bought in the market to the handmade primitive bow was not considered a drop in expenditure.

Compared to the store-bought bow, the handmade bow's accuracy, and durability of the was a bit troubling. Drawing the bow also required much more strength and the tree bark that he used had a risk of breaking after being used more than a hundred times. The average lifespan was about 150 arrows.

The target he had set for himself was 300 arrows per day, which meant that he needed to change the bow strings twice.

By day 172 since he arrived on the island, Zhang Heng achieved his goal of hitting a still target within ten meters without fail, and a success rate of 70% at thirty meters. The threat of his arrow was greatly reduced if he aimed for anything beyond this distance.

After that, he was notified that his archery skill was raised from Level 0 to Level 1.

Zhang Heng was still not satisfied.

His goal was to reach Level 2 before entering the forest for his expedition. That way at least he would be able to protect himself.

Outside practicing his archery skills, Zhang Heng did not idle. He had moved from the cave into the clay house which sat on the border of the forest, and after moving all of his belongings, made another batch of clay tools. Today, he was finally able to eat out of a bowl.

With his Level 1 archery skills, Zhang Heng went deeper into the forest, close to where he had found firewood the first time. Again, he encountered that fowl-like creature.

The animal made some strange sounds upon their meeting, as if mocking Zhang Heng's failure to capture it, and then speed its feet and disappeared into the bushes.

But the very next moment, a wooden arrow came down from the sky and pierced its body.

Concurrently, the voice in Zhang Heng's ear made another announcement.

[Successful hunt, Game Point +3, you may view information on the character panel...]

Zhang Heng's palm was drenched in sweat. The distance between him and the fowl creature was only about seven meters—a distance he was comfortable with but once his target moved, his shots would not be as accurate.

This shot was much more urgent than usual, and his breath was slightly ragged when the arrow left his bow. Good thing, his many hours of practice came into play. It also did not hurt that the bird was on the plump side.

The creature struggled for a while, and then finally gave up reluctantly.

Zhang Heng walked over, collected his arrow and then bend down to examine his game.

The creature had a strange appearance. Zhang Heng had thought that it was a fowl but upon closer look, he realized that its beak resembled a duck's but with a curve at the tip; its body was much larger a fowl and had blue-gray feathers, short and small wings, and a pair of rather thick legs.

This thing looked a little ugly...

Zhang Heng had come across a bird atlas once, and this thing was not in the book. But since it ate fruits and seeds, then theoretically, probably, maybe, it should be... edible.

This whole time, on the island, Zhang Heng had eaten some meat. But the flavor of seafood like fish, prawns, and crabs could compare to meat that lived on land.

Zhang Heng had been thinking about this fowl-like creature since the first time he saw it. Unfortunately, that time, he had no idea how to capture this nimble thing. Today, having honed his archery skills, Zhang Heng reached out his claws to grab this innocent little creature without a moment's hesitation.

Zhang Heng returned from his hunt fully loaded. Other than the 15 catty 'fowl', he also stumbled across some wild potatoes on his way back.

The thing was rich in starch, and could be used as a staple food. At the same time, potatoes are also high in calories. Zhang Heng did not eat much of it, he set two of the largest ones aside to be eaten with the meat tonight, and then placed the rest carefully into his basket. He planned to grow a vegetable garden by the house when he got back.

Potatoes grow very quickly. Once he got them into the ground, he would have an endless supply of potatoes.