

48 Hours a Day

Chapter 15: Desert Island Survival IX

In the beginning, Zhang Heng counted the days until the day he would return to reality.

But later on, he found that doing that did nothing else but frustrated him. The more you keep an eye on time, the slower it seemed to pass.

So, Zhang Heng no longer kept a record. During the fourth harvest of the potatoes he had planted, he received an alert.

[Archery Skill has progressed from level 1 to level 2. You may review the information on the character panel]

Zhang Heng dashed into his house and dug out the Tissot buried in the corner. After putting the watch on, he saw that he had been on the island for a total of 385 days—it had been more than a year.

Even though he could not compare to Robinson Crusoe, it was considered pretty incredible for a city person.

In fact, Zhang Heng had already gotten used to life in the wilderness. To make life more comfortable, his clay house and vegetable plot had undergone two stages of expansion. The house had transformed from a single-room building to three rooms and one living room. Zhang Heng even added floor heating. The vegetable plot, on the other hand, was producing more potatoes than he could consume. Zhang Heng sliced the excess tubers into thin shreds using his stone knife and left them out to dry under the sun. Thus, began the birth of his 100% organic baked potato chips.

In addition to that, he also found some onions in the forest and transplanted them in his vegetable garden. After that, he spent a good portion of his time setting up a fish pond, an outdoor bath, and a

breeding garden next to his little hut. In the pond, he kept the fish and crabs he did not eat, and that 'fowl' which had its head stuck in the fences became the first tenant of the breeding garden.

After shooting at it for a month and a half, the creature went from 'I'm not afraid of anything, I challenge you to come and try me' to a blanked-eye, spiritless empty-nester.

Zhang Heng felt sorry for it and resisted the urge to eat it. On a whim, he decided to keep the 'fowl' as livestock, in hopes that he might be able to harvest eggs someday. But the dream was destroyed when he found out that the creature was a male.

Forget it. Zhang Heng decided to keep it as a pet and named it 'Mickey Mouse'.

Compared to the fish, birds, and crabs, the creature had a slightly higher IQ. After a while, some interaction was established between master and pet.

For 80% of the time, Zhang Heng was able to hit a moving target within a ten meters distance, and 50% at thirty meters. When his archery skills had advanced to Level 2, he knew that it was time to make a move.

So, he spent ten days putting together food and supplies for two people, and preparing one month's worth of ration for Mickey Mouse. Then he chose the toughest wood he could find and fashioned them into spears to be used as melee weapons.

On the 401st day, when he went to save the drifting adventurer, Zhang Heng was paddling on a wooden raft that he had made.

"Thank you, friend. Are you an indigenous person on this island? A typhoon sank the ship that I was on. I was the only one who swam here. I'm exhausted. If it weren't for you, it would not have ended well for me."

Zhang Heng was dumbstruck. 'In what way do I resemble an indigenous person?'

He consulted his reflection in the seawater. Fine, this face does look aboriginal. He had been on the island for too long. Other than the watch, everything that he had with him when he first arrived was all either broken and unusable.

Nonetheless, it was still a pleasure to be able to see someone of the same species. It had been almost a year since Zhang Heng had spoken to another person. He could barely contain his excitement as he handed a wooden pail filled with fresh water to the man.

“My name is Zhang Heng. I’m not a native. I was in a shipwreck like you, but that was a year ago.”

After the adventurer drank the water, his complexion improved tremendously. At first, he was worried that this aboriginal man had saved him so that he could have him for dinner, but was relieved and delighted to find that the other was a civilized man.

“My name is Bell Butre, and I served in the United Kingdom Special Forces Reserve 21 Special Air Service (21 SAS), climbed Mount Everest and then decided to become a host, explorer, and author... You said that you’ve been living on the island for a year? That’s really quite incredible.”

“More precisely, I used to have two companions. But neither one of them made it.” Zhang Heng paused for a moment and then asked. “Do you remember the two people who fell into the sea with you?”

“What two people who fell into the sea with me?” Bell appeared genuinely puzzled. “When it happened, I wanted to save people but a huge tide knocked me unconscious. When I opened my eyes, I saw this little island.”

Zhang Heng was not surprised by his answer but felt that it was a great pity that Bell had no memory of Ed or that guy in shorts. He most probably did not recall that he had been drifting in the ocean for a year either.

Zhang Heng decided to play along even though he really wanted to know why the game repeatedly brought this bug back.

They paddled back to shore, and Zhang Heng brought Bell to his little hut.

“Did you make all of these yourself?” Seeing the clay house with a 180-degree sea view, the thriving vegetable garden, and the pond brimming with fishes and prawns, Bell exclaimed, “I don’t think there’s anything I could teach you. Even I could not have done better.”

As he was speaking, Bell’s eyes fell upon Mickey Mouse that was howling in the breeding garden, and he let out a shriek.

Zhang Heng thought that Mickey Mouse’s hideous looks had managed to bring a grown man to tears, and was about to introduce them to each other when Bell suddenly cried, “My god! What am I seeing?! Dodo bird! There’s still a living and breathing Dodo bird on this earth!”

This time, it was Zhang Heng’s turn to be stunned.

He was no stranger to the name of the Dodo bird. According to the records, this bird lived comfortably on the island of Mauritius in the Indian Ocean until the arrival of a group of European colonizers. A calamity fell upon this species and in a short period of 200 years, the birds were completely wiped out. Until now, not a single complete specimen had been found.

Zhang Heng could not believe that he had so casually eaten the national bird of Mauritius.

But since it was a game, nothing was too surprising.

Seeing how confident Zhang Heng was, Bell was a little troubled. So, he decided to give his new friend a scientific explanation. “Dodo birds were completely extinct in 1681. Opinion differ about how that happened—some people say that the Europeans ate them all, some say that the animals that the colonizers brought with them brought about a biological invasion, there are also theories that it’s because of the environmental changes... whatever it is, they have completely vanished from earth. Sixteen years ago, the bones of the Dodo bird were sold at an auction

for 500 thousand pounds. Your discovery on this island will shock the whole world!”

‘Unfortunately, this was just a virtual game world. The plot outside of the island was a whole lot of nothing...’ Zhang Heng thought to himself.

Instead of telling this to Bell, Zhang Heng decided to use a different, more easily acceptable method to convey the message to him. “Bell, if this really is a Dodo bird, we have to find a way to leave this island and show it to the world.”

“You’re right.” Bell agreed. “The fact that Dodo birds exist on this island is not good news for us. It means that no one has ever come across this place. I’m afraid this place is not in any of the ships’ courses.”

“I’ve been on this island for more than a year. I’m already very familiar with the outer regions of the island, and I was thinking of going into the heart of the island to explore... Hmm, who knows, I might be able to find a way that could get us out of this place.”

“Then let me come with you. I think I could be of help when it comes to exploration.” Bell said excitedly. “When are we leaving? Tomorrow?”

“No, no... Let’s wait for two more days so that your body can recover fully, and in the meantime... have a chat with me.” Zhang Heng looked at the explorer with eager eyes.

“???”