

a normal novel collection

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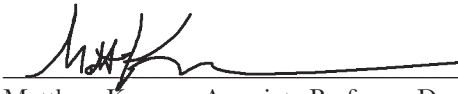
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Master of Fine Arts in Digital + Media in the Department of Digital + Me-
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By

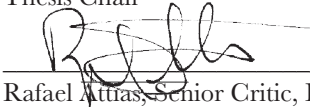
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Abstract

This thesis is a game novel collection.

Which is an experimental attempt that I use the playable texts as a way to document daily clues. While reading the thesis, the readers will have an experience of the game-like sense of substitution and view switching.

Through the narrative of texts, I try to express that in the future, making games which under structural wraps is a living strategy way to self-expression and communicate to outside in this hyper-normal spectacular society.

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Dark Fly

1

You are already old, not younger at least.

Your wife Sofie sits there facing you. In the meanwhile of eating rice by chopsticks elegantly, she complains the newbies from the company about how they perform slowly; she begins frowning, as every single typical day in the seven years after they got married except the honeymoon.

You finish the action of eating dinner without appetite, drop down chopsticks and leave the dining room, sit down in linen sofa immediately and pull out the cellphone from the pocket. You find that there is a new APP logo shown in your phone's background, a mobile game actually, with a little bug face. You are not a person who plays the game regularly. This game was downloaded by your friend Joe who works in a game company. You hesitate whether to uninstall or not.

Sofie begins cleaning the leftovers, covering them with plastic wrap and placing them on the top of the fridge.

“The fridge is still leaking! Call someone to fix it, I told you.” Your wife complains when opening the fridge door. At that time, you chose you would not uninstall the game and opened it for instead.

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Therefore, you run away from the complaints of your wife successfully, jumping into the shiny world of the 4.7-inch screen.

You are seeing a cutie, vivid bug like creature, flying rounded in the void of the screen center. It likes a real bug, but simply, you remind what Joe said: “It is a great bug fly simulator game with specific reasons.”

“I wash the dishes every time recently; you know what, next time I give up and why you even cannot fix a fridge?” Sofie begins cleaning chopsticks and bowls.

You do not listen to your wife’s words seriously; your bug, in another word, like a sparkle creature, flies over to a weak light.

“Pong!” Sofie closes the fridge door loudly.

You realize the light has high gravitation when you get close to it; at the same time, the little bug is also attracted by the light and flies into the center immediately. The screen pops up “Game Over” notice. Now you know the game rule, which is kept to avoid the light by control bug’s fly carefully. “You can leave them until tomorrow, and I will wash them all.” You mumble to your wife softly, and then you are immersed in the game completely, being a real game character.

I keep a balance between my swift actions and the gravitation of the light source, fly over rapidly, two vacuum lamps, one gas incandescent lamp, one table lamp, one drop light.

The gas vacuum lamps are ghostly pale and flash; although they attract me by 360 degrees, I don't want to attach them at all, their ugly faces are too showy in the world, and I fly over them successfully.

The light of table lamp is soft and kindly, and not strong. The light area is also not full, like a cute girl, like my wife in honeymoon. I see there are some bugs already sucked in the light center, and they prefer to leave the tender feelings. I don't want like that; this is a sweet trap, and it still is a trap.

The light source of the drop light is like a warm umbrella, and it seems like a big hug which is too hard to refuse. I almost couldn't help leaving that area, but I have to overcome this habit or inertia. As an idealistic bug, my goal is to see the end of the world, further away at least, and I don't want to be attracted by near warm traps.

With over several lamps, I get a score, fly into a peaceful dark area. That might mean I have won this level. I slide for a while. I have attracted to another light source again and fly over without hesitate.

Over a few of minutes, you have finished the first level, which is a tutorial level actually, but you cannot wait for next level with a full sense of accomplishment.

You still play this game until the sleep time.

You dove straight into the quilt in the bedroom, leaning against the pillow. Your wife is changing the pajamas and swiping the body cream to her legs. “Look at my new pajamas, how is it?” Sophie says with the sense of expectation, her voice is softer than that at dinner time.

Both your eyes and fingers cannot leave phone screen, and you glance her a second; it seems as a fat braces skirt without a back part, what color? Pink? Or Rose. When your eyes move to real space, it will show the incidental image color, which causes you cannot reason what color of your wife’s pajamas.

“Eh, it seems right.” You reply.

The second level is harder than the first level. I always have to face two lamps in different directions. The traps exist everywhere. I have to make more efforts to concentrate on distinguishing and avoiding the light sources. When I look out of the droplight at the top, keep flying deeper. However, there is a floor lamp showing up, and then I am attracted by powerful light immediately. I hear the sound of burning.

“Ah, I am dead!” You shout with beating the quilt, and cannot leave that immersive regret feeling.

“Enough! This kind of things can’t work by myself.” Sophie gets angry.

“What?” You don’t understand at all about your wife’s words.

She closes the bedside lamp, lying on the pillow, and using quilt to cover her head.

You start playing this game again and remind what Joe said, that is, this game does not seem natural, as well as needs not only the focus but also a little strategy.

The entire room is filled with dark except for the phone screen.

I feel I am changed to the little bug altogether, seeking the light source on the one hand, and avoiding being attracted by lights on the other side.

This level makes me dead for lots of times, every time when I am dead, the light will expand. I am shocked by the sight of the dead bug’s bodies, and you can judge that by depending on how the density of the dark dots in there.

Sometimes I fly the “Z” trace, sometimes I fly the “O” trail; finally, I overcome this level at the seventh time.

3

Because of playing the game so late last night, you are sitting on a sofa and lethargic in office.

An energetic beverage salesman is sitting beside you, and his big round eyes stare you, continually saying his ideal new advertisement campaign plan.

“It must be attractive! Attracting the masses like sucking them into the television!”

“Mr. Lin, have you seen the prototype of the campaign I sent you before?”

“I have seen it, that sucks, like a piece of shit, did you let your interns make that? Why I ask you to do this!”

You almost jump out, and you spend two nights and three days on polishing that work.

You keep down the blue veins on your temples, saying with the smile: “All of our projects are pushed by our groups in the company; we believe what I sent to you is suitable for your product, and that can match your product’s calm, refreshing style...”

“What usage they have? Those pictures are not attractive at all. If you paste them to the subway, nobody will notice that. We have lots of budgets, and we can hire stars!”

You keep the fire of angry, keep talking with your client until the break time of lunch.

Your face returns to the indifference mode; after finishing the lunch, you continue playing the game.

The difficulty changes to next degree in the third level, and there is an array of weak fluorescent light, blinking continually. I cannot see their details clearly but have to keep controlling my flying trace. When I fly rapidly into the whole light area, I am attracted, and that's so spectacular, the fluorescent lights grow up, they are converted to LED screens, televisions, colorful snow flowers; there are bunches of dancing stars behind the sparks.

It reminds me of the client at this morning. I fly the trace of "Contempt." These are their dreams, and what they are doing, that is, letting everybody attracted by televisions, commercials. But, am I not also a peer of them, as a commuter of advertisement company?

Although I have already known the truth behind, the whole sick industry, society, such a pity world.

I have to conquer this level. I cannot give my whole life to evil consumerism. As I beat the desire, I feel much stronger, then I overcome the third level. I feel I conquer the ages followed by a sense of satisfaction.

4

There is a campfire at the front of me. The attraction of the campfire is tender and fervent, the direction of gravity slightly changing by distortion of firelight. Sometimes the campfire sprays star-like sparks, rising, rotating, dancing and disappearing.

”Hiss....” My wings hit a spark, and the spark is zooming out, like a coagulated amber, wrapping me instantly. The spectacles show in the viscous textures, a bunched group of party animals; women are dressing Late ceremony skirts; men all have an elegant appearance and are tidy. They keep toasting each other.

“Come, come on Let’s drink!” The department’s head toasts to us, and every colleague stands up, raising their hands with wine glasses, extending to the steam of hotpot.

But you are still playing a game, and don’t response to anyone; when you raise your head, you find everyone stares you, including your head boss.

You feel so embarrassed.

“Hah, he might be working so hard for a project design, which will cost three nights and be refused again by clients.” Your colleague Chris says.

“Haaaah...” Everybody laughs. But your boss doesn’t think this is a joke.

He knocks the glass on the edge of the pot and calls your name, “Enough, we are waiting for you, come over.”

You twist your nose side, restrain your emotion to avoid laughing face through your thought. You are completely different from before. They all guys are just vain hypocrites soaking in social party games; they keep eating, gathering, drinking, like reality junkies, and keep staying in fake shiny things.

After toasting, you bend your head and back to the game.

On Friday night, you come back to home, and your daughter who is attending the kindergarten runs and jumps into your arms.

“Daddy! I miss you.” She shouts loudly but innocently.

“Sweetie, dad miss you too.” You reply tenderly but quickly because you want to play that game. When you finish the hug with your daughter, you sit directly on the sofa, pull out your cellphone. But your little girl jumps to your legs again, “Dad, take me to a park with merry-go-rounds in this weekend!” You cannot reply because you meet a difficulty which you never experience in the game.

Lots of colorful neon lights, making light pillars, oscillating, swing, flirting are at front space.

Every time when I try to fly further, I will die. The neon light pillar grows up at the dead time, and the surface of them is creamy and dirty, with pinky dubiousness. These scenes with distant background music remind me of the days when I was a boy, I saw lots of pink massage shops in the old lanes, voluptuous women stood at the door, kept vomiting men in the street, the noisy sound of quarrel full of live feelings l from windows. The deep narrative sense throws out from the screen, flirts me and makes me dead several times, I almost forget the aim of the game, stare the screen for a while, and then come into my mind to play it again.

I am dead numerous times inevitably. When I am dead in different light pillars, I see different scenes with specific music; those elements attract me to wonder and detect what tricks or metaphors behind the scenes. This time, it almost is my slowest level, but I feel happy to lose the game. I actually want to die in every light pillar. After numerous dead times, I finally find the trick of this level; when the pillars keep swinging, I should keep stopping in every little dark corner which cannot be covered by light.

When I turn up my head with a happy feeling, I see daughter is looking at me with crying face.

When she cries quickly, I comfort stiffly, without affection: "What, what's wrong, honey? Don't cry." She is crying somehow. Sofia follows the sound and come over,

"What did you do? She just has come back, then you make her cry? Who can be a dad like you!"

"I really don't know why," I mumbled, touching daughter's back, but still thinking about the scenes of that level of the game. I should call Joe, tell him thanks for sharing this good game for me.

I go to the reading room, close the door, and dial Joe's phone number:

"Hello? Joe! I played that game to the fourth level!" I cannot cover up my excitement.

“Not bad! Buddy, how is it? Is it funny to relax? As a little mobile game.”

Joe says lively.

“Yes..sure.” I feel little shy because I am almost addicted to this game for some reason.

“Who develop this game? Have any purpose of this game?” I ask Joe because I feel this little game is different from others, and it seems to hidden a story.

“You played intensely, and this game designer normally has very low attitude, never shows up to the media. I heard from somewhere he was inspired by the idea of traditional story: ‘A flying moth darts into the fire,’ he wants players to represent the fly, who want the instinct and experience that feelings.”

“But I really want to see the light inside and die there somehow” I am shocked by my response.

“Maybe that is the one purpose of this game” Joe laughs.

After holding off the phone, I cannot calm down for a while, and it might be a fortune for me to play this game, I think.

6

That annoying beverage client comes again, unexpectedly; as Chris said before, he refuses your proposal again.

“Your company guys! Have you ever actually listened to my suggestion?”

He throws the files on my boss’s office table directly at this time. After he has gone, you are called into the CEO’s office.

“You are working almost over ten years, being group leader over two years. Why you make such basic mistake? Do you think you are still an idealist junior student? Full of shitty artistic feelings, arrogant with ignorance of client’s requirements? What have you done in recent days? Even play the game at the company party? Are you ready to quit the society and go to the deep mountains? You have the last chance to solve this deal. Otherwise, you will lose your leader title, go back to the basic level.” Big boss says with a serious face, trying to pretend to be kindly.

When you come out from the office, everyone gloats at you with different facial expressions. You ignore all of them, go back to your office place and play the game again.

Your case is diffused by gossip groups in the company, and only after half of the afternoon, it spreads to your wife’s ears, whose place is only across two lobbies to your place.

Dinner time.

“I have heard you don’t care the leader title at all, and even give any shit to the boss. My face is lost at all at today! Do you really have no idea about what losing the title and reducing the salary means? My colleague’s child, sitting by my side, takes the personal training class with 10 thousand bucks per semester, our daughter only can go to regular kindergarten. Can you care more about your family, Er?”

You keep silent, keep playing. Because you are already in the ending level, the truth is near; any performance outside of the world cannot disturb your mind.

“Are you even listening to me when I talk to you?! I was blind before, how can you be such a man? Such a useless shitty bastard! I want to divorce!”
Wife shouts and pounds the bowl on the table. Your daughter is shocked, crying immediately.

You are interrupted and dead again. You stand up with bitter feeling, and holding the cellphone, you walk into the restroom and lock the door.

“Don’t think hiding in the toilet can avoid all things! You better suck there, never go out, you bastard.”

The last level almost gathers all kinds of traps, every trap, the temptation in another word I do experience, only the arrangements are more intensive and unpredictable. After countless death times, I finally fly into a peaceful dark area. Is it the end? Probably not. I keep gliding, there is a sun-like enormous light source at the front, filling the whole screen entirely; it makes me have no way to avoid. I am dead, and I am sucking in warm holy light. The light turns shallow continually; there is a passage that shows in the center of light.

“Don’t keep running away, you have no place to go.”

Hot-spring Heaven

1

There is a giant word 'ENTER' appearing in front of you. You go into it without any hesitate. After two seconds' loading, you stand at a reception desk of a hot-spring hotel, in Virtual Reality environment. The reason why you play this game is funny. Just because when you wear VR device to choose RPG games in the bathing pool, additionally, you have seen the role setting of Hot-spring boss, and you are just attracted by the ridiculous sense of playing a hot-spring operation simulator game in a Hot-spring Hotel. Therefore, you must experience it whatever happens. This game is designed with a high-quality graphic and proper difficulty; you just keep playing it.

After a busy operation all day, Guests are leaving gradually, and bunches of cleaning robots begin to wash giant bathtubs in every area. I walk through the main baths, glance at the leisure lounge on left side, and several lazy Reptilians are saying good-bye to the common waitress.

"Alas! We should come earlier today."

"I am No.401, very nice to meet you, hope see you next time."

After they leave, I smile and walk to the bridge zone. I feel happy to see robots which have this advanced communication skills.

I continue walking to bridge zone.

“Mr. Luke, the bridge area cleaning is finished, and no problem has been found.” A robot leader glides over to report.

I am standing at the longest high bridge, looking around the entire bath hall, and seeing the travelers from different galaxies leave the hotel, I stare, and truly admire those people who are just completely relaxed.

This game is developed by Camryn. All hot-spring hotels are similar to Camryn local cities. As a liquid planet, Camryn is very suitable to run a hot-spring hotel because of the land surface of high falls and the unstable earth-crust. The sea creature resources are very abundant here, but there is no formal restaurant before Hot-spring Heaven food and beverage department launched because of continuing political unrest. It can be said that Camryn has developed all relying on those great entrepreneurs and workers. Maybe it is the spirit of this game that it wants to tell people.

You make lots of efforts to operate this hotel in the game. It achieves a big scale. In the beginning, you have to settle the hotel in the small city Maryland because of a limited budget. At the pre-open time, only guests who are fed up with hotels in the towns come here at several times. After you try different hot-spring pool themes and continue advertising, your hotel will get the high passenger flow volume like nowadays.

The guests who are still in the bathing pool are rare. I close the temperature controller in the empty pool. I run out the dirty water and then open the high temp antivirus model.

I have to check the requirement of guests who will come tomorrow, and then arrange the number of bathing pools with a different theme based on it. Amphibians like a swamp, Frogs like Balloons, Chocolates like low transparent water. If the number of theme pools meets the requirements of guests, the hotel will be most productive. Also, I will get a rich return. If I charge fees to check what species will come, I will know the details of the requirement.

But I don't want to know that by money. I like randomness to some extent, and an ideal game should be like this.

You feel a sense of suppression in your chest. You take off the Virtual Memristor headset, and then your consciousness is back again. But the Frogs' surroundings catch you off your guard, and they are surrounded by colorful water vortexes. You just forget your amphibian body form. Although the thinking massage experience here is not very fancy, it can make you forget the reality for a while during running a hotel in a simulation game. It seems that you have your own world except for all others in reality.

You lower your head to check whether every part of your body is relaxed completely while you are thinking about this. Then, you stretch your arms and legs to swim toward the above, leaving the sphere bathing pool of the Amphibians.

To be honest, you have a regular lifestyle now. You cover your identity by a driver major, working for long distance of interstellar. Also, your time chart routine is already settled down by your bosses like a real driver. Although the prehistoric winter sleep habits make you suffer drowsiness sometimes. The Hot-spring Heaven provides the perfect place for relaxing. Every part of your body is not all deeply massaged. You can experience different world in immersive games. In term of this, you have a chance to forget the endless annoying traveling time, and the tasks which are complex so much that cannot think whether that legitimacy or not.

You order a cup of beer, take a rest in relax hall for a while. All guests of the bathing pool almost leave away, but there are still two more hours before your return time. You see nobody in the pool. It seems to only belong to yourself, so you return to the pool again, and continue playing the game.

A frog person comes out of the bathing pool, the webbed feet disappear, and body changes to the slender form. He is wearing a loose bathrobe, wiping head and then walking to me.

“Old rules, a cup of green beer?” I tell him.

He nods at me with a smile and sits down in front of bar counter with a satisfied face.

He is one of the earliest guests. I should say, he is an ideal guest with a gentle personality. He tries many new thinking message headsets in the earlier time, and always has no complaint on even products broken sometimes.

On the contrary, he gives full experiencing problem feedbacks. He says he is a transporting driver, but I know he is not. A driver is impossible like him. There is no regular time at all when he comes here. Sometimes shorter, sometimes longer, sometimes at Spring, sometimes at Summer. Even in busy traveling season of Autumn, he still comes. But I never query him. Everyone has secrets in this tumultuous time, less or more. It is a wisdom of social skill with no query and exposure.

“What a wonderful time!” He drinks a sip of beer.

“It will be so perfect if I can keep wearing the headset in the bathing pool.”

“You have a soft job, and you can come over at any time.”

“But I still have to go back to work. You have a perfect job than I, such as operating a hot-spring hotel.”

“Taking the fortune of your guests. It is better than before in recent two years. Even other planet guests come here to experience the thinking massage.”

“True, these are good things.” He breathes out a ball of white air.

“But, I hope you move to another planet in advance, don’t leave here any more.”

“Why? Camryn has good hot spring resources.”

“Not peaceful. You’d better take my advice if you trust me.”

This is the third time that he comes here; every time when he leaves, he will mention the affairs about moving hotel. I ask him for an answer, but he always says: ‘Not peaceful.’ Of course, I know the situation, and I have experienced civil war twice in Camryn.

“But just because of this, I don’t want to lose the hotel which I built hand by hand,” I say to him.

He smiles slightly, widely with mouth pushing to the edge side of his face.

“Is the newest game about Vega? Give me to play that, just in case there will have no chance to try.”

I take up a cleaned Memorizer, operate the user interface, and open the space of Vega for him.

He takes off the bathrobe and returns back to frog figure form.

The character of frog person takes a transition for narrative, and he should be the enemy of this game, and he will hinder your hotel which you continue managing. In another word, there is a big crisis showing up in your simulation game, and you have to deal with it and resolve it. You have already guessed a half of his identity at least.

Ironically, you always face game characters who are similar to your identity in the real world. You have already served in secret agency for 8 years. In those years, you get used to being a liar, betrayed, murder, etc. Therefore, you calmly accept the settings of secret agency enemy in the game. This is the funny part of VR RPG games, and you may represent the completely opposite character to kill the one like yourself in the real world. Besides, this is not the first time you meet a secret agency in the game. Generally, the trick is finding an evidence of his identity (The data basement always leaves some traces, waiting for players to pull out), and then killing him at a good time.

It is time to close the hotel, only leaving him in the bathing pool. Robotic cleaners begin to clean the space. Every cover on tables has been taken off. Every storage box has been opened. The storage of frog person is also opened. His clothes and bag are dropped off to garbage pool.

I walk there, pick up his stuff, put them on the bar counter, prepare to deliver them until he plays over.

The clothes of frog person are very thin, and both suit and jackets are ironed very neatly. I smile that a transport driver will not be serious about dressing. I clear up his cloth. Then I feel a specially raised border when I touch the collar of the suit. I open the inside part, and a label shows up.

‘No.9 Scout’

I know he keeps hiding his identity, but do not know he is a Scout, a Spy from Planet Empire. What is his job in Camryn? I feel his job will relate to my hotel when I think about he always wants me to move out. I open his bag, finding a file folder, with the content title of the paper inside: ‘Camryn boom plan.’ There are lots of studies, charts, reports about Camryn landscape and resources in the files. The most thickness part of the file is about my hot-spring hotel’s area. There are three triangle symbols shown there.

At this time, frog person comes out of the pool, and his body gradually turns to thin, wiping and walking to me.

4

The game will still be a game. This spy job is really simple and rude. There is no cause or effect at all. The blow-up way is also rough and primeval.

However, as a real secret agency staff, you know there must be a reason for every case, generally related to political goals. For example, you travel to Camryn as a transport driver. The truth mission is finding a good test place about dimension collapse missile. You feel sorry every time when you think about this. But you can't do anything about it. You surely know this area is the best place to test during these two years' observation.

You have studied many planets of this galaxy, and delivered rich report contents of the natural resource, economy, population and governments of every planet to Government of Empire. They are almost running to the final decision except for several files in your hands now. In an optimistic view, the planet will recover into a well-living atmospheric environment; otherwise, it will be a death planet permanently.

You always came to this hotel on business trips before you got this mission. They who seem to be upper elites are despising hot-spring culture. They believe this is the habit of low planets' people. Actually, you get some feelings about the hot-spring boss don't believe you are a transport driver. But he doesn't seem to expose your identity. It's precious about tacit understanding. This might be the last time of tender emotion. You can do nothing except to cherish the time. You thoroughly understand that individualism never wins the organization.

The progress will never change even if you die. It is better to play some games, massages in the break of shitty job time.

The frog person has already seen I am reading his files. He walks over, standing at the bar counter.

I stop my actions, feeling the embarrassing atmosphere.

There are about three secs of silence in between each other.

“Will the hotel be the blow-up spot?” I say first.

“Sure, a great chance.”

“It will be settled when I deliver those final files.” His honest attitude makes me amazed. Perhaps there are no needs to hide any more.

I keep silent for a while, tear the files with ferocious features, like a homeless dog struggling in a snow land.

“Well, this is useless. These hand copies are sync with my personal cloud memory.” He stares at me.

“I don’t care what your original true identity is, and I don’t want to ask. But now we are standing at the opposite point. As the host of this hotel, I will not let you go alive.”

I take out a laser gun from the bar counter, aiming at the frog person. He jumps up to the top of the roof immediately. His legs are just like a spring tool. I am chasing and shooting him. There are bunches of holes showing up on the walls of the hall. I stand for a sec for expecting his action. I hit him when he jumps down from the droplight. He died on the ground. The mission of rescue is complete.

The game is loading the next chapter. You smile with satisfaction, planning to continue to play in next bathing time. You have one chance to play this game at least. You think, playing to whatever a stage in the following time. When you are planning to unplug the headset, suddenly, you feel your body is extremely tired, and even you cannot raise your arm. Then, the world after the ‘EXIT’ is dullness and blur during spectacles getting disappear.

Underwater, faint awareness is wrapped by warm lights through the water. A voice rings on your ear side: “How dedicated you are to playing the game! You completely don’t find I raise the temperature at every half an hour.” It is the voice of the hotel boss, a tender friend who always hands over you a beer.

“You know who I am?” I ask.

“Yes, I turn over your all files.”

You can hardly contain yourself for a laugh. But the bad thing is that your muscle of your face can’t work any more.

“I don’t care what your original true identity is, and I don’t want to ask.

But now we are standing at the opposite point. As the host of this hotel, I will not let you go with alive.”

When he speaks over, he pushes the bottom of kill virus in high temp.

Suddenly, you get a burst feeling on your body. But after several secs, you feel nothing. Your flesh and mind transform to the vapor, all disappear.

Forests Town

1

I stand up from my office cube in the company, walking to the water corner, and take a cup of water; then, holding that cup, I walk to the window side, like a machine. This is the third time I come to the window side. So, I have to say hello to my colleagues who sit on this way several times. I look out from our sixth floor's window. Like every evening, most well-dressed people and flashed shop signs lose the color. In the gloomy light, the traffic on the street is still heavy. The woman who stands on the opposite street to sell pancakes has not appeared for two days.

I think, if I suddenly disappear, this company will not change at all. My game design proposal will be abandoned as before. The computers will have new host very soon and continue buzzing. Others will say hello to the new designer and continue drawing or coding as nothing happens. It is similar to the situation that no one notices that woman selling pancakes has disappeared. I raise my head up, seeing the concrete ceiling. It seems to see this concrete cube-like building releases hopeless dust in wear down and collapse on day and night.

I cannot bear this meaningless job and the concrete city anymore.

Then, tomorrow, I submit my resignation, return my rented apartment, and take an old green train.

I get off at a ruined station. I walk in a lush growth forest and climb a mountain then I arrive at a valley. All the noise of train and cities is far away. I only can hear the murmur of the spring harps, and the small wind rustles through the forest. Finally, I feel calm down inside.

I find a dry cave, thinking I can live here after cleaning things. However, when I in the front of the cave, checking the environment, I am just shocked by a roar with stink odor. I turn to run. The black bear chases after me. I feel deep fear, but just keep running. The branches with growing mosses skip over my side. I step on fallen leaves and keep running, and don't know the directions. When I feel I am almost swallowed up by the death. A flying rope goes towards my head and then wraps my waist. Suddenly, it pulls me up off the ground. The black bear raises head and keeps roaring for a while, then walks away eventually.

2

I calm down gradually. I find that every tree here is as thick as a table for eight persons, with overgrowing mosses and mushrooms. Branches almost block the whole sunshine. In the meanwhile, my waist is bounded by a rope, hanging me in the air, away from the ground around two meters. The one side of the rope is tied to a branch of a big tree. The other side is held by a big beard man's hands. Big Beard makes me down slowly. I stand on the ground and know I am just rescued.

Big Beard jumps down from the tree and speaks to me: “You can’t just walk below the trees without weapons. It is too dangerous.”

I am nervous at a loss.

I ask him: “What is this place? These trees are so weird.”

“This place is the border area of the Forest Town. That’s why there are beasts appearing.”

Big Beard wraps ropes to a circle, putting on his shoulder.

“Follow me. I will take you to the town.”

He takes a big rock rolled by vines again, putting on his another shoulder.

“Forests Town? Does it also belong to our country? Which province? Why I never heard about that?”

“I don’t know what you are talking about. We say we are the children of the forests.” “But we can normally talk. We use the same language.”

“I can speak to any creature.”

“Any creature? You mean you can communicate with birds and worms?”

“Yes. But animal language is easier than ours. They are just about the description of foods and directions, calling friends and the signal of danger. Your language is more complex. You may come from a complex place.”

“Ah, yes. In the place where I come from, people create lots of county’s name for dividing themselves, beating each other; use many materials to build houses to box up themselves; then they invent tons of economy, culture and science words to mess up in the ocean of language debris. I just want to escape that complex world. That’s why I come here.”

“Sorry, I cannot understand what you are talking about. If you have no place to go, you can live in Forests Town. Although I feel the town also becomes complex. It shouldn’t be like the place where you left.”

“Thank you very much! I originally just want to find a place to live, to cultivate. But now, I realize people like me who are already habituated to live in the group. It is hard to survive to be alone. Do your people cultivate? Or hunt? You seem to be a hunter.”

“I don’t know what hunting is. We haven’t this word. I might be a hunter. I come here to find the minerals.”

There is no cultivation, and he needs to find the minerals. I can’t imagine what kind of lifestyle about Forests Town is. I am following Big Beard’s steps. I realize the surrounding trees become thicker than before. My eyesight is almost blocked by the branches, and I can’t see roads far away. Some trees have huge flowers, some have colorful fruits. I see many groups of fruits hanging on branches. Some are fresh, and others are dried in the sun. Big Beard tells me these fruits are the main food for them. It is called cyan berry. Those are from last season, still being dried. Those cyan berries hanging on the branches are like a tapestry. Some branches open up small windows. Someone shows his front to hang on the fruits. There are some children riding the top of the tree bar, wiping a leaves branch to the hungry birds. This series of action is very simple and pleasant, like the action of that woman selling pancake in my company downstairs.

That woman showed up every day on the opposite street at the time before she disappeared. I sometimes patronage her pancake stall, standing at a group of office people, seeing she continually makes pancake one by one. She could fill spoons full of paste, watering on the hot plate. Then she takes a wooden tool to spread out evenly and wipe some sweet chili sauces.

When the paste turns into the dried flour cake, then she uses a shovel to go deep into the beneath of the flour cake from different directions, scrapes the cake out of the plate to the chopping board, puts on a fried bread stick; cucumbers; corianders; an fried egg and some chopped sausages or fried chickens. Finally, she uses the shovel folder the cake step by step to a rectangle. She puts the cake into a convenient paper bag and then delivers it to her guests. Her fingers are oily but slender. She always wraps sleeves to her arms, showing up her tight brown skin. Her hairs are warped to her back naturally. Tender eyes have traces of years. But her nose stands firm. The lines of mouth are also determined. In some mornings, I see there are sparkling beads of sweat on her nose, as a dewing leave is just bounced by frogs at the side of a pond. I think she doesn't like this city people at all. She should not belong to this world.

3

I walk through the fruit yard. There are pale colored trees appearing in the front.

The layers seem very rough, seeming to be covered with a layer of gray scales. When my body touches a tree of them, the pale scales just fly up. I am shocked for a sec, just returning to the reality from memorizing. They are moths. Groups of pale moth stand and are covered with the layer of trees.

“This place cultivates silkworms. Now it is a season of the moths laying eggs.”

“Silkworm? You use silks to make clothes?”

“Not totally. The soft silks at the top level are expensive clothes for rich people. Others close to the bottom are more hard and sharp; we use them to cut things.”

After walking through a group of white trees, Big Beard says: “Here it is.” But I don’t see any house. The scene in front of me is huge trees one by one. These trees are much bigger than before. There are many windows and doors on the tree trunk. Also, there are some rolling stairs wrapped on the tree trunk and other small platforms built on big branches. There are wooden bridges connecting with trees; some are straight, some are round for avoiding branches. The scene on top of the head is almost all branches and leaves. The men and women of Forest Town just appear in the windows, stairs, lower or higher bridges. I am shocked by this puzzle like city, shocked and obsessed.

Big Beard says: "Let's go to my home."

I walk after Big Beard to get close to one of the giant trees. We climb some levels of stairs, walking into a small door. The space inside is not wide. A wooden table and some chairs are settled in the middle area randomly. There is a window on the wall. The small table on the beneath of the window is settled by cups and bowls and also made of wood. A ladder leans are on another side of the wall towards the hole of the ceiling. An old woman with white hair is watering in a cup. She mumbles some things with an old voice, and she raises her head to see me.

"Aha, the guest comes." There are so many smile features in the old woman's eyes with crow's feet wrinkles. She turns around and picks another cup. "Come, come, drink some water."

Big Beard throws the rock from his shoulder to a corner. He drinks a big sip of water.

"Take a sit, be casual."

I sit down, taking the cup of water from an old woman. I feel comfortable about the smile of an old woman and the honesty of Big Beard. I say thanks with a smile. This tree house is filled with fresh wood odor. I breathe this air, feeling so relaxed in my whole body. It makes me think again about the memory of that pancake woman.

She wears a normal shapeless dress. It makes her bloated. The feet wear flat shoes. The calf of her legs is the full figure, but her ankles are slender. On that day, I worked over time. When I went out of the building, that woman just cleaned off and prepared to leave. I just saw her always blocked by the shore. I thought these legs were just like the rhizomes of water plants. I started to follow her. I followed her and went through crowded streets, rounded roads. When we walked into scattered suburb area, she walked into a shabby apartment with red blocks. The water plants like legs disappeared. The red clouds behind of this building turned to dark.

Suddenly, that door opened again. A woman came out of her home, stared at me, shifting at a sec.

“Come on in.”

4

“Young man, where do you come from? Do what kind of job?” The old woman says, dragging me out of the memory.

“I lived in a concrete city, worked in a lifeless company, and designed some boring games. That is a not good place. Not like here.” I laugh, a little reserved.

“Eh, okay. Forest Town never rejects outsiders. But you’s better to learn our language if you want to live here for a long time.”

“You can communicate with any creature, don’t you?”

“Not exactly. Forest Town has its own language. The communication with creatures is an ability to run in our family. Much earlier. Our families are the wizard as a major.”

“Wizard? So this is the gifted skill?”

“No, it still needs practice a lot. But it starts from mine generation. This ability has been much weaker than before. People don’t think it is worthy keeping.”

“Why?”

The old woman takes out a sign.

“Because people nowadays don’t need a wizard. Now, I am still a witch. But my son is working on search minerals.”

At this time, there is a little girl showing up from the hole in the ceiling. She stands on the half of ladder. Then she sits down there. Her brown hair hangs on her shoulders. She wears a branch circle on her head. She stares at me. Her eyes maintain keen vigilance all the time, like a smart deer.

“This is my granddaughter.” An old woman calls for a little girl with some words which I don’t understand. It seems like calling little girl to come over. But the girl stays at the ladder, just staring at me.

“She is afraid of strangers. This girl.” The old woman says. “Look. People nearly don’t understand other creatures’ language in her generation. Maybe she can understand birds.”

“So, where is girl’s mother?” I say.

“Oh, her mother, passed away by accident at three years ago.”

I notice the girl’s eyebrow frown for a sec. I just open mouth with the awkward atmosphere. Then the better thing happens. The old woman says:

“If you want to live here for a long time. Let my son give you a job.”

Big Beard drinks over the water in the cup, saying: “Okay! I will take minerals to the stone factory. Then I will ask for a job for you.”

5

I live in this town. My job is making knife tools. They take the sharp silk to tighten the branch, making a bow, use silk to cut the minerals to design shapes, then they are polished by tree layers.

When we get the shape of the knife, throw it in the melting silk pool. Placing a layer of liquid silk, after drying it well, it will be use. The tightened silk is very sharp. Although we all wear gloves, if we touch the silk line occasionally, it will lay to open our skin.

When I first start to work, I often hurt my hand. Every time when I go back home, the little girl gets a bandaging for me. The girl's action is not skilled enough. Her little hand is pinned by the bandage, around the circle in my big hand carefully. Soon, her nose will be on some sweat. I learn a little Forest Town language, entangled with their own words and bluntly talking to the little girl.

“You can understand me now?”

The little girl says: “Some.”

“Does not your grandmother say that you only understand birds' language?”

“They don't know, I also can understand the worms.” I am amused by the girl, saying: “Really? How old are you this year?”

“Nine years old.”

“When did your mother pass away?”

“At my five years old.”

“Will you miss her?”

“Yes.” Girl lowers her eyes. “But, I'll see her again.”

“You're too young to understand death, and when you grow up, you will accept it.”

“No, I know the meaning of death. My mother didn’t die. My grandmother and father are lying. Before my mother died, she said she just wanted to go to a larger world, larger enough to let her drown and disappear inside.”

“Maybe she just didn’t want to tell you too directly, that is death.”

“No, it’s not!” The girl’s lips angrily quiver. “After she went away, I learned to dialogue with the worm. I ask the mother’s message from insects on birds every year. They show the pictures about mother’s appearance. This is the third year.”

“But, if the worms can tell your mother’s message, then your grandmother should have already known it. Maybe the worms spell the picture, just your own imagination.”

“You are the same with them. You all think I just imagine. People from Forest Town ever leave here. Only migratory birds will come from outside every year. But they just only use birds to worship, never speak to birds and the worms on birds. Also, they believe those worms from outside cannot communicate. I will find my mother one day, and tell them this is not my imagination!” Tears come up from girl’s eyes. But she immediately bites lips, with a stubborn expression. This expression reminds me of the determination of that woman’s lip line.

In fact, her smile can be equally sweet way, but she barely smiles. Since that time when I followed her into her room, I often go there and make sex with her. She is direct and neat, and always undresses quickly every time. When she is doing, her actions are intense, with shouting, just like wanting to grab me into her body forever. I look at her fleshy lips, feeling full of desire, but also alienated. After we finish, we lie in bed with panting. At this time, she will smile at me. We speak some words. She has no relatives in this city, no friends, alone. I asked her why not find a man to live together. She said, if she had relationships here, she would feel associated with the city. So she can't enjoy the kind of exile feeling.

“So you will not stay here for too long?” I ask.

“When I started to feel familiar with a place, I left.”

A woman stands up and pours water. She is naked, leaning against the cupboard, standing full of breasts. Nipples are proud of the tilt, living in the dawn of gray sunlight. Her face returns to silence, no longer speak. At this time, I know, I should go.

So after a month, I came to her house and found her gone. And then attached to two days, her pancake stall didn't appear again.

I remembered the scene that that woman was naked in the cupboard, still feeling missing. I think of this woman's leave without a message. I think, this exile, disappearing in the views of all acquaintances, and no longer making herself appear in anyone's vision. This exile is really like death. So, there is no difference from what the little girl said, that is, her mother was gone and or was dead.

"Well, don't be sad, your mother is gone, is gone." I use my bandaged hand to touch the girl's head, to comfort her.

The little girl still doesn't think I believe and keeps saying about the scene which she sees from worms. She said that in the first year. The worms showed a picture of a woman holding a plate, surrounded by a cloth in front of the way. Although she has never seen her mother dressed like that, she surely knows that is her mother. In the second year, the worms showed a picture of a woman pushing a piece of wood bar, and there were two circles under the board. Although she doesn't know what she was doing about, she knows that it must be her mother.

In the third year, the worms showed a picture of a woman holding a piece of rag, wiping the table. A girl says it must be mother's new home.

I listened to her silently, and don't comment because I don't want to argue with a girl.

Moreover, I can't imagine how the little girl sees these pictures.

6

The days in Forests Town are simple and quiet. Every morning, Big Beard and I go out to work. Beard finds minerals, I do the knife tool. We usually carry some dry cyan berries, used to make lunch. When we come back at night, an old woman and the girl are ready for dinner. They sometimes cook cyan Berry fired mushrooms, sometimes do berry jam, of course, they do other fruits which I can't say the names. But I have never seen meat dishes.

I ask: "Do you never eat meat?"

"Yes, once a year." Answers the Big Beard.

"Once a year, why?"

"It is the time of worship every year. We will sacrifice the blood of the black birds to this land, and then every family will bring a few black bird meat back, everyone will eat a little." Big Beard's face gets serious.

"Sacrifice? How to do that?" I ask.

The white petals continually fall softly at the outside of the window, a few slices fall into the window. Some sounds of birds chirp come from outside. “You will know very soon. The birds say: ‘We are coming.’”

One morning, I walk out of the door and find that the petals are no longer falling. The accumulation of thick petals on the ground is like snow. The trees have no flowers anymore. At this time, I see the old woman appears in the largest platform of this town. I don’t know when she goes out. She leans on a cane, bows her back, looks panting. Climbing the platform should cost her a lot of effort. Morning sunlight pours down from the top of the leave in the gaps, according to the platform, to the old woman’s wrinkled face. Every family opens the door after another. I find that other people are like myself, standing in the doorway, looking up at the old woman, as waiting for somehow. The old woman lifts her crutch in the golden sunshine, and declares with old voice: “They are coming, build the net!”

I have not yet understood what that means, the people in the mineral field are pulling a silk transport car on the ground. I recognize those materials. It is the root of the output. The one they use is for cutting things. Then the men of every household go down to here to take pairs of gloves.

They begin to divide the silk. Groups of people hold a circle of silk and climb up to different trees. For a while, the trees stood full of people. They climbed very high, some of them reach the top of the canopy. They skillfully cooperate between the tree and tree, branches and branches. End of the thread is tied to a different branch. The thread is tited, all toward to the west. Soon, the branches are covered with staggered silver silk. And birds always jumping here disappear. That sharp silk is enough to kill the collision occasional of birds.

When people finish the new works from the tree, it is already afternoon. I have never seen this spectacle. I keep raising my head to watch.

People are waiting in their homes for a while. The sun gradually falls down. The clouds are filled pink color on the west side of the sky. Suddenly, the sky shows a black spot. I feel the commotion in the crowd. The black spot grows larger, like a piece of black cloth, accompanied by the sharp sound of the birds. Birds' sound is getting closer, I finally see, it is a group of black birds. A group of black birds, arranged in the air like a shape of a fish, fly toward the Forest Town.

The shadow of the birds continues to devour the town. When the shadows completely envelopes the top of the town, One-third birds fly into the town's branches, the place with silver silk foliage.

Suddenly, the black birds struck the staggered line and are split parts.
Their blood and guts drip from the thread. Their bodies fall to the ground.
The town is under the red rain now.

At this time, the little girl suddenly rushes into the blood of the rain and runs to the bloodbath covered with blackbirds on the ground. She quickly turns into red and clears out a piece of open space. And then she kneels down there, mouth muttering. Some black worms crawl out of the black bird's body heap and gather them into the open space. The black spots spread to the different directions and then gather together again, spell a picture. It is a woman, whose hair is wrapped to back, standing in front of a pot. She is making pancakes.

I stared at the scene, my meats of the heart are also like this black birds, like, rustled down.

After the blood rain runs out. People come out to pick up the black bird's body to take back to home, solemnly eat over. After a day, the town is under a heavy rain. The blood on the ground is rushed into the underground. The bloody water is sucked into the roots of the trees. Trees of the forest begin to bear fruit, and soon the fruit will be a harvest. So a year has passed.

Conclusion

Flies avoids lights;

Frogs in the warm water;

Migrants sacrifice for the town.

These phrases are not only the paradox but the main imageries of what I want to expound through the narrative in these several game novels.

In these imageries. I want to present that the features of fleeing inertias; the crisis of identity; even the tendencies of self-destructions are hidden in modern people's daily routine.

These imaginary spectacles offer the sense of void and the surrealistic texture to the flat reality. The purpose of experiencing these unusual textured realities is that letting people counteract the ontological meaning in game playing. For people had lost the action force in reality during pursuing of meaning. Therefore, it is a way to preserve the free will in the self and other people's imagination.

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