

Fishermen

Haozhuo Wu

PART ONE

When I boarded the engineering ship named Babylon, I knew that my past had been burned to the ashes and disappeared. The time and space had wiped out love and hate, and another new fisherman was born.

I got on the boat at Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Destination: No, because Babylon sailed to all oceans and water bays. Sailing time: forever, because we fishermen were wandering in the sea for life. Those people on land said us shoulder a lofty mission.

The dark green endless sea was hidden in the white mist, and the white waves were rushing to the hull. In the gray sky without the horizon, the black clouds stretched with the

wind. The wind sent a smell of irritating nose with moisture.

“Annoying people! Why can’t we get rid of the annoying existence of sulfur dioxide!” I looked around and noticed another person on the deck. A dirty yellow hair, deep eye sockets, prominent cheekbones, in the morning he wore a worn punk wind denim jacket.

“Hey there! You are?” I walked to him. He revealed his brown eyes in alert, which made me feel like I had seen him in the laboratory on board. I sat on the cargo box opposite him.

“I was a chemist,” he said, “but what is the meaning of each person’s identity on this ship? I am Roland.”

I extended my right hand to him, “My name is Ica. I used to be a member of the Doctor Without Borders. Do you like Stephen King? Or do you know that your name comes from that long poem?”

“Hey, you should talk about the name of this engineering ship. Is the tragic ending of the Babylon Tower also bringing bad luck to us?”

“I reckon that the name is good. The fishermen on board are from different countries, and everyone is an excellent candidate for the UN certification.” I said seriously.

He hesitated, and I saw the complexity in his eyes. “You have to know that there are hundreds of teams dispatched by 37 governments, but our task is to cure the symptoms not to solve the root problem. It is useless and worthless for serious pollution. We——fishermen——are victims!”

In silence, he twisted his head and looked into the distance. After all, every fisherman is a storyteller. We are a group of paradise evaders.

I remembered the day when the UN Secretary-General held the first press conference for the Fisherman Plan two years ago. At a high latitude in the north, I felt that the summer temperature was unprecedentedly high: 44 °C. The rise in temperature was due to the growing greenhouse effect. This was just

the performance of the tip of the iceberg of terrible environmental catastrophe.

“...what is caused by the atmosphere, water, soil, radiation, and thermal pollution? What are the large areas of acid rain, smog, forest death, and nuclear leakage?” said the Secretary-General. The flash kept flashing in front of him.

“...most seriously, there have been a large number of cases in which animals have been contaminated by chemical pollution in some countries. For example, British scientists have found that in 50 lakes and rivers in the UK have been degenerated. After investigation, it was found that the root cause of pollution was the contraception into the sewers. For instance, a large-scale pigeon attack in Central Park in New York half a month ago killed 63 people and injured 312 people. It was a source of chemical pollution and caused the pigeons to mutate after eating them...”

“...this is a threat to the safety of all human beings. It is a destabilizing factor to social

security, which is also a panic of food safety.

‘What if the meat I eat is contaminated and mutated? Who can guarantee for me?’

The fear expressed by a Japanese in an interview with NHK is the concern of countries and people around the world, but please do not worry and do not panic. In the face of the precipitous situation, we are now working out two countermeasures.”

“The first program is the Fisherman Plan. Member States will select professionals who equipped with the best tools, weapons, technology, information, resources, then they will eliminate contaminated animals, and clean up marine pollution. The signs of pollution of the oceans are obvious, which is far more serious than on land, but we have been deceiving ourselves and continuing to discharge waste. Now we are standing near the abyss, so it is time to take coercive measures to govern the environment. As for the most polluted oceans, who will solve it? Fishermen! They are heroes who protect the environment...”

“Which country do you come from?”

Roland interrupted my meditation.

“All human beings are facing a crisis of extinction, shoulder to shoulder, and does nationality still have meaning?” said I.

“Wait!” said Roland, “You remind me of someone I know. He is called the last day generation. You must know that. Oh, yes, 15 years ago, BT protein was recognized by the International Society for Microbiology.”

His words made me depressed. BT toxic protein is called “the plague of the 21st century”. Due to the long-term and widespread consumption of GM foods, it is a disaster caused by human beings-genetic recombination that expresses BT protein. BT toxin can cause female infertility, male infertility, so the number of newborns worldwide is plummeting. Forty years ago, it was predicted that genetically modified foods would exterminate humans, but society did not recognize the effects of BT-toxic proteins that imposed on

them until many years later - only to recognize the toxicity of genetically modified foods.

Similarly, humans had been eating melamine for 50 years before we realized its nephrotoxicity, but it was too late. Although there have been cases in which children have been born through cloning in recent years, babies born under high technology are not licensed by the society and ethics.

The end of the serious environmental pollution, the evil result of our parents, is what humans are looking for. We this generation are the sacrifice of the last day.

Roland said, "Tell you a story. I am not afraid of the dangerous life of the fisherman. I am not for the reward provided by the government, nor for the honor of the country or the personal heroism. When I announced this decision to my family, they were strongly opposed. In short, I have come to this place with all my difficulties. I have become a fisherman to guard... protect the good, just like the smile and happiness of the most loved one."

“Last year, my girlfriend and I went to Australia’s Ayers Rock. We had been together for one year. I loved her deeply. We just got there, and suddenly there was a strange sound in the distant forest. We stopped in the distance then saw something run out of the forest, no, it was surging... They were snakes! Thousands of snakes, coming from the forest to us! Ah, I pulled Jane and started running, but...it was too late. I was also seriously injured. So many snakes wouldn’t appear there without reason, but why? I realized what El Niño or what La Niña phenomenon caused was a climate anomaly, causing species migration. Jane’s death has made me start to repent and anger. All this is human self-sufficiency...”

Roland’s voice gradually fell, and his face buried in his hands, sinking into sad memories. I wanted to pat him on the shoulder to show comfort, but I didn’t.

I smiled bitterly, “Human beings’ guilty is even heavier than the original sin. It is worthy of redemption for many generations. Our crime

is to destroy the environment for hundreds of years. Now it is our turn to be punished, but don't despair, what if we succeed? As the captain said: What we believe in and what we strive for is hope because we are the hope.”

He looked up at me, and I met in his deep eyes. The ship was driving in the vast sea, yet the distant route was looming in the fog. Where were we going? What were we? What would be our future?

PART TWO

We received the SOS signal from another nearby fisherman's engineering ship. It was too late to see the overturned steel ship when we arrived at their location. In the center of a white wave was a humpback whale that wandered with a big belly and a large area of abnormal edema bubbles on the back, which was the proof of the contamination. It was about 40 feet long, and roaring rushed toward us.

“Run!” My teammates recovered from the shock and ran away. The hull swayed, and we looked so small and weak in front of the giant. Ordinary hunting weapons are not applicable at this time, for this is the most horrible creature that everyone has ever seen.

“All back!” A new batch of troops was added. They were armed with a plasma rifle, and the firepower was fully open. The humpback whale’s abdomen was cut through a long hole. First, a large amount of blood rushed out. Then, the bloody gas contained water vapor, and the red, fat intestines exploded. The internal organs continued to blow up. Suddenly, stench and bloody are everywhere.

“The logistics staff clean it, please.” The voices were noisy, and the footsteps were in a mess. We dragged the cleaning machine from the rear deck, and the debris floating on the sea broke, disintegrated, and dissipated under the action of ultrasonic waves emitted by the machine...

The only survivor in that fishermen's engineering vessel was rescued and sent to the ICU.

I met Roland outside the ward. "It's weird, isn't it? How can such a monster appear in the Baltic Sea? I have never seen such a monster in various sea areas in the past few years, and the degree of variation is so serious."

"It's really weird. You mean, someone is deliberately stocking here?" Roland's face showed a confused look. I nodded and pushed the door of the ward.

The man was already awake, who was lying on a strange white bed, and his look was tense. "I want a private space, please! A nurse just went out," he shouted.

We made a brief introduction, but the reaction of the man was cold. "You don't have to know my name. The venom of the whale has penetrated my liver. My life is not long... can you guarantee that the next conversation is not eavesdropped upon?"

He was totally troublesome, I thought to myself. He only needed to tell us his true identity and the incident, then the rest was the consulate's matter. I took a small scanner from my waist and turned on the whole network detection mode for the whole room. "No suspicious device signal, safe. "

The man's breath is extremely weak. "All the fishermen do is the most glorious behavior in the world, so don't let the people in the whole world down... I am also fighting for the faith... take it, this is the last remnants of all my dead companions. For this wish... they lost their lives..." His left hand twitched to his chest. I stared suspiciously at the empty palm of his hand, then Roland and I looked at each other.

"Unbelievable." Roland grabbed the man's palm forward and pulled out a saber stabbed into the palm of his hand, then blood spurted. "Ah!" The man fainted in pain. Roland picked up flesh and blood. "Look, how hidden it is." A

small piece of blood-stained memory card appeared.

Roland inserted the micro card into the card reader of his terminal, and the air hologram projected a dense code. He waved, and the faint blue elves danced, and we were surrounded by them. “There is so much information stored in this, which takes a lot of time to decipher.”

We browsed the page, and our faces became paler “Before our guess is correct, the appearance of the whale is not accidental! It is a military experiment! Some documents are missing to explain the purpose of the experiment. There is no doubt that there is a military experimental base in the Baltic Sea. Dozens of countries are involved. Look here, your and my country are also there! They have created a large number of mutant giant halobios.”

“How does the Fisherman Plan relate to this matter?”

“We are used by the military! We clean up their experiments so that they can declare that

everything is fine. As the ocean pollution is so serious, who will find something unusual? The Fisherman Plan is a disguise to appease the people——”

“There are gigabytes of information here. It’s not enough for us to break them. We need outside help, and——”

“Tell the public.” I was shocked by his words. “People have the right to know the truth. Or do you want them to be brainwashed by the perfect world situation, or is it good hypocrisy in the politicians?”

“No, I certainly hope that the world will be better,” I argued, “but your thoughts are too extreme. After all, this involves state secrets and international relations——”

“Do you want to keep concealing? Right, you have to maintain the image promotion of your country,” Roland’s face turned red, “I want to inform the UN Security Council of the military experiments which must be banned.” His yellow eyes were twinkling.

I sighed, his original intention was good, but there were some vague concerns in my heart.

“Will you support me?” The desire in the voice was so strong.

“Absolutely.” My belief was also so firm.

PART THREE

“Ica, come to the captain’s room.” My terminal received a voice message the next day at noon on the deck. When I entered the captain’s room, there was a tense atmosphere. Roland, who was surrounded by a group of people in the middle of the room, twisted by anger.

A man and a woman walked toward me. “I am a special investigator from the United Nations. This is the head of the CIA.” We shook hands with each other. “We need to talk alone.” They signaled me to walk into the small room on one side. At the moment when the

door closed, I saw the complex feelings in Roland's eyes.

“Do you remember why you applied to be a fisherman? Because you have committed a crime.” The other person's words made me unprepared.

“When Doctors Without Borders were stationed in Karbala, you were responsible for treating a 9-year-old girl, but you stopped taking medicine without the consent of her guardian. She soon died because of a lack of drugs. Then her family sued you, so you lost your job and lost the trust of everyone.”

“No! The child was hopeless at the time, so it was a waste to continue to give her medication. I couldn't waste precious medicine.”

“But the other people didn't say that, did they? Think about how they judged you.”

Silence fell.

“What do you want?” I asked.

“We can completely cleanse you and restore your past work. As long as you promise to us.”

“Ha, a deal. What do you want me to do?”

“Nothing happened in the Baltic Sea, not to mention the military.”

“You want me to lie to the world?”

“No, it is a precious chance to promote peace and love to the world. You will become the official propaganda image of the Fisherman Plan, so think about the honor you will receive.”

I smiled bitterly.

“Your younger brother, the last day generation. It is the title that keeps his efforts out the society, what can he do in the future? If there is a way to eliminate the specialty of his identity, he will be accepted by others.”

“You guys are so shameless, and even take my brother to do it!”

“And your parents, if you choose to oppose us, how can their security be guaranteed?”

At this moment, I finally understood what happened to Roland's angry expression.

"For the bright future of the Fisherman Plan and to maximize the benefits of all, toast!" The red wine in the bottle was the blood of the sea.

As soon as I left the captain's office, I went straight to the ICU only to find the bed was neat.

"Where is the injured man?" I asked the nurse.

"Nobody," she replied.

"No, I sent the only survivor of another fisherman's engineering ship yesterday!"

"You must have made a mistake. Yesterday I was on duty, no one was sent." I saw the panic in her eyes.

"Forget it..." Everything turned in front of my eyes. All the information was tampered with, and the traces were erased.

I found Roland at the corner of the corridor. His reddish eyes hinted that this was the worst result.

"Are you determined?" I asked.

“There is no way out. I have lost too much, and the world has disappointed me too much. This is the only hope, for which I would even pay my life.”

“If this is what you dream for, I wish you will not regret it in the future.” Said I.

“I wish that you will not regret your choice in the future too, dear friend.” Said he.

“Just go and hide,” I sighed, “may you bring the hope of all victims and to tell the truth to all human beings. Get rid of this darkness now.”

“Remember, may the force be with you and me.” Roland grabbed my hand, and that was the last time I saw his eyes smiled like a crystal.

Under the light bath at dusk, the two figures left a long silhouette under the scars of time.

PART FOUR

Three years later.

I have never got any news about Roland since then. Perhaps to escape the “anti-human” wanted in many countries. He has erased his existence, so I told myself.

“Today’s schedule?” I asked the personal terminal, the mechanical synthesis sound came from the personal terminal, “10 o’clock, a speech on the theme of the beautiful earth at the UN General Assembly; 14 o’clock, attended the ‘Fisherman Foundation’; 19 o’clock, The photo promotion of the United Nations Goodwill Ambassador——” “It sounds interesting.” I muttered to myself.

I walked over to the windows and looked at the gray sky to recall a secret late-night conversation three years ago——

“If you run away, someone must help you inside the government.”

“Help me and cover up my trail?”

“Yes, that person must use some political means to divert the attention of the masses and the media.”

“For what?”

“To create a safer environment for you. To get more time for your escape.”

“You must not——”

“I must. In the name of the bright right hand and the dark left hand, I can pretend to be on their side.”

PART FIVE

The instructor turned off the screen then said to the room, “This is an information record left by a person named Ica from the old world. The ‘Fisherman Plan’ lasted only ten years, so historical scholars rated this as the ‘21st Century Odyssey’. However, later the United Nations has stopped this stupid program and turned to the second program—New World Plan. This is wonderful——”

“Happy recreated home!” Many young children in the room shouted together.

Outside the room, was the darkness of silence.