

Final work

by Zexuan Liu

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Eclipse Shadow Crisis: A Zombie Disaster Universe Construction Plan Set in China

1. Introduction to the Universe

Type and Tone:

'Eclipse Crisis' is a fictional universe that combines survival horror with a disaster narrative, set in near-future China. Its tone integrates high-intensity survival pressure, scientifically realistic horror, and a test of human nature under extreme conditions, eschewing supernatural and fantasy elements to focus on the social impact of a biological disaster.

Central Themes:

Conflict between Group and Individual: In a Chinese society where collectivism often supersedes individualism, how does disaster redefine 'collective' and 'self'?

Modernity and Vulnerability: How the infrastructure of an internet-connected modern society becomes both a fatal weakness and a lifeline during a disaster?

Memory and Forgetting: Comparing historical experiences of combating viruses with modern disasters, and how cultural memory influences survival strategies?

Redefining 'Life' and 'Death': The zombie phenomenon blurs traditional boundaries between life and death, prompting reconstruction of ethics, culture, and social order.

Core Setting:

In 2088, a leak occurs at a biolaboratory in western China, leading to the spread of

the 'Eclipse Shadow Virus' . This virus is not the 'resurrection' depicted in traditional zombie lore, but rather a highly invasive neuro-parasitic complex. Infected individuals are called 'Eclipse Shadows'. Within 72 hours of infection, the parasite takes control of the host's brainstem and parts of the nervous system, retaining basic motor functions and aggressive instincts but losing higher cognitive abilities and memories. Infected individuals are abnormally sensitive to sounds and specific chemical signals , exhibiting extreme aggression, particularly toward uninfected individuals.

Virus Transmission: Primarily through bodily fluids. China's high-density urban environment, developed transportation network, and complex social structure cause the disaster to spread at an exponential rate.

2. Main Character Setup

Protagonist: Chen Yan (34 years old)

Appearance and Background: Former engineer in the Chinese Railway Engineering Corps, now a high-speed rail network security consultant. 180cm tall, muscular but not bulky, with long hair. Born in a rural area of Sichuan, he entered Southwest Jiaotong University through the college entrance exam, joined the military after graduation, and participated in the extension project of the Qinghai-Tibet Railway. Married, his wife Lin Wei is a researcher at the Disease Control Center. They have a 6-year-old daughter, Chen Xiaoyu, who was staying with her grandparents in Shanghai during the outbreak.

Personality and Motivation: Pragmatic and resilient, deeply influenced by the military's "mission accomplished" spirit, but harbors doubts about systemic failures deep down. When the disaster struck, he was attending a high-speed rail network security conference in Xi'an. Initial motivation: To cross half of China to rescue his daughter in Shanghai. As his journey progresses, he gradually realizes the insignificance of individual strength and transforms into a mission to find a solution to the root crisis.

Relationships: Has a deep relationship with his wife Lin Wei but feels guilty due to their infrequent time together because of work

Antagonist/Complex Opponent: Zhang Lijun (52 years old)

Appearance and Background: Deputy Director of a local Disease Control Center, later the actual controller of the "Longnan Safe Zone". Wears a white shirt and has relatively long hair. From a medical family, his father is a famous infectious disease

expert, but he has never surpassed his father's shadow academically. In the early stages of the disaster, his laboratory was one of the first units to come into contact with cases.

Personality and Motivation: As a prominent government official, he views information control as a necessary means to maintain order. Initially concealed the epidemic to avoid panic, but later it developed into a power grab. He believes that only strict information control and centralized resources can preserve the spark of civilization.

Key Secret: His team discovered early on that some infected individuals have abnormal reactions to specific frequency sound waves, but this discovery was suppressed because more research was needed; premature disclosure would lead to uncontrollable civilian experiments.

Guide/Wise Figure: Xu Wenshan (68 years old)

Appearance and Background: Retired researcher from the Local Chronicles Office, a folk historian. Slender and tall, with sparse white hair, often wearing a faded Zhongshan suit. Born in Gansu, he was an intellectual in his youth and worked at the county cultural center for his entire life. Has in-depth research on local folk legends and historical records of plagues in the northwest region.

Personality and Motivation: A typical Chinese folk wise man—appearing traditional and conservative on the surface but possessing wisdom outside the system. Believes that there are shadows of today's disaster in history. He does not seek medical solutions but looks for historical experiences of isolation, survival, and community rebuilding from folk legends. Initially saved by Chen Yan, he later becomes a spiritual mentor and provider of practical strategies.

Special Contribution: He recalled records from the Republic of China era about how a place in the northwest dealt with an unknown plague, mentioning a folk ritual called "driving away epidemics with sound", which ultimately became one of the key clues to combat the Shadow Eaters.

Character Relationship Dynamics:

The conflict between Chen Yan and Zhang Lijun represents the confrontation between ordinary people and officials; the relationship between Chen Yan and Xu Wenshan symbolizes the dialogue between modern technology and traditional wisdom; and Zhang Lijun's disdain for Xu Wenshan's feudal superstition reflects the neglect of non-mainstream knowledge by bookish theoretical knowledge.

3. Narrative Design Elements

Viral Science Setting:

Name: 'Eclipse Shadow Virus' implies the virus erodes human nature, leaving only the shadow of a shell.

Scientific Mechanism: Initially misjudged by the Chinese Academy of Sciences as a mutated rabies variant, it was later found to be a hybrid of an ancient bacterium and a modern respiratory virus. The bacterium enters through the nasal cavity, travels along the olfactory nerve to the brain, and releases the virus to alter neurotransmitters.

Chinese Element Manifestation:

'Solar Term Fluctuations': Infected individuals exhibit Obvious seasonal activity patterns—they are relatively sluggish during high summer temperatures and enter a hibernation-like state during extreme winter cold.

Sensitivity to Specific Sound Frequencies: Research has found that Eclipse Shadow Infected person react with confusion or avoidance to certain frequencies, and high-frequency sound waves affect them.

'Homing Instinct': Some Infected person display a tendency to move toward their birthplace or long-term residence, providing a potential means to predict the movement of infection clusters.

Key Environments and Scenarios:

1. Disaster Origin: Lanzhou New Area Bio-Industrial Park

The initial leak was covered up as a 'routine accident' because an international inspection team was present that day.

The first infected person was a cleaner at the industrial park. Her movement Trajectory (long-distance bus station - urban village - hospital) became the initial transmission chain.

2. Infrastructure:

High-Speed Rail Network: Initially accelerated the spread of the virus (during the tail end of the National Day holiday when it erupted), later became a channel for

survivors. Chen Yan used his engineering authority to gain partial dispatch control over sections that had not yet completely collapsed.

'Ghost Train': An unmanned but still operating train carrying infected individuals back and forth on the Beijing-Shanghai line, becoming a mobile source of infection and a terrifying symbol.

Urban Villages and Quarantine Walls: Guangzhou and Shenzhen's urban villages, with their complex terrain and spontaneous closure, became the prototype of early survivor communities; later, official quarantine walls were established (such as the blockade line of Wuhan Yangtze River Bridge).

3. Shelters:

Official Protection Zones: Converted from underground facilities, with strict discipline and rationed resource distribution, and strict health screenings.

Civilian Shelters: Based on Minnan fishing fleets, utilizing the relatively safe marine environment to form mobile communities, preserving a large number of folk beliefs and spontaneous organizations.

4. Reconstruction of Natural and Artificial Wonders:

Qinghai Lake Salt Marsh: The high salinity environment naturally inhibits parasitic activity, becoming the site of later research stations.

Guizhou Tiankeng Cluster: Utilizing the natural enclosure of tiankengs, Shelter communities were established.

'Digital Great Wall': Surviving technical personnel attempted to restore part of the BeiDou satellite functionality to establish a mobile tracking network for infected individuals.

5. Key Items/Technologies:

'Silencer': A civilian-invented personal protective device that emits specific frequency white noise to interfere with the infected's auditory perception.

Improved Traditional Chinese Medicine Protective Agent: Extracts based on traditional epidemic prevention herbs such as mugwort and angelica dahurica. While it cannot cure, it can mask human body odor.

4. Politics, Culture and Society

Evolution of Political Landscape:

Initial Stage (0-3 months): Concentrated Response and Local Collapse

The central government initiates the 'Great Wall Agreement', declares martial law, and military forces take over key cities.

However, the outbreak of the virus during the peak of the Spring Festival return journey led to rapid collapse of transportation hubs, cutting off communication between the central and local governments.

Local units gain autonomy for self-management.

Middle Stage (3-12 months): Reform of the Surviving Regime

Northwestern Joint Governance: Led by remnants of the military and scientific personnel, with goals of vaccine development and restoration of order.

Southwestern Mountainous Joint Governance: Characterized by mixed ethnic living, adaptive survival, and flexible organizational forms.

Southeast Coastal Joint Governance: Based on fleets and trade, with resource exchange as the core.

Central Plains Agricultural Cluster: Reverts to small-scale farming, holds a skeptical attitude towards the outside world, and is closed and conservative.

Late Stage (After 1 year): Embryonic New Order

Connections are established among various factions, and a barter-based economy prevails.

The 'Knowledge Committee' is established, dedicated to preserving technology and culture.

Debates over the legal status of Infected person: Are they patients, the deceased, or a new species?

Social and Cultural Changes:

Evolution of Rituals and Festivals:

Qingming Festival: Transformed from ancestor worship to a collective mourning day, but approaching cemeteries (areas densely populated by 感染者) is prohibited.

Mid-Autumn Festival: The tradition of 'Moonlight Silence'—on that night, everyone tries to make as little noise as possible because Infected person are unusually active on full moon nights.

Language Changes:

A large number of neologisms emerge: 'Shadow Groups' , 'Clean Zones' (safe areas), 'Sound Hunters' (people who use sounds to attract Infected person and set traps).

Radio communication develops concise 'Safety Codes': Three digits are used to indicate location, resources, and threat level.

Art and Expression:

'Silent Theaters': Survivor troupes perform using only sign language, facial expressions, and dim lighting.

Memory Preservation Projects: Survivors orally recount history, especially details from the early stages of the disaster, to prevent collective forgetting.

Reconstruction of Class System:

New Skill-Based Elite: Doctors, engineers, radio operators, and martial artists see their status rise.

Privileges of 'Silencers': People naturally quiet in movement and with slow heartbeats are better suited for outdoor resource searches.

Marginalized Groups: Those with hyperacusis and individuals requiring regular medication (such as diabetics) struggle to survive, sparking ethical controversies.

5. Narrative Structure and Visual Presentation

Key Sequence Design (Assumed for Film/TV Structure):

First Act: The Fracture (1-30 minutes)

Opening Sequence (5 minutes): Nighttime cleaning scene in a Lanzhou laboratory, with subtle anomalies (muffled noise from a ventilation duct, a single uncleaned liquid droplet). Entirely realistic style, no music, only ambient sounds.

The Collapse of Routine (15 minutes): Chen Yan at the Xi'an Convention Center, piecing together the scale of the disaster through fragmented mobile phone

messages—his wife Lin Wei's urgent voicemail cutting off, chaos appearing in his daughter's kindergarten live stream, train station notice boards turning red en masse.

First Turning Point: Chen Yan decides to defy the stay-put order and head to Shanghai. Visually, the scene shifts abruptly from an orderly city night view to chaotic streets, using handheld photography, with colors transitioning from cool blue-gray to disorienting warm orange.

Second Act: The Crossing (30-90 minutes)

High-Speed Rail Terror (20 minutes): Chen Yan and a group of survivors trapped on a halted train, with infected individuals gathering outside. Using engineering knowledge to activate backup power, but the noise attracts more infected. Scene design: Claustrophobic horror of a modern high-speed rail carriage, with familiar Jiangnan scenery outside punctuated by jarring violence.

Meeting Xu Wenshan (15 minutes): In an abandoned service area in Anhui, Chen Yan rescues the besieged Xu Wenshan. The dialogue takes place in the service area supermarket, with empty shelves and only cheap tourist souvenirs remaining. Visual contrast: Modern consumerism relics juxtaposed with a traditional wise figure.

The Confrontation at Longnan Safe Zone (25 minutes): Entering the safe zone to obtain fuel and intelligence, they discover the truth behind Zhang Lijun's control. Scene design: A residential area converted from an underground parking garage, uniform yet oppressive; Zhang's office retains a complete rosewood desk and national flag, creating a satirical contrast with the outside world.

Low Point: Chen Yan learns that the Shanghai safe zone where his daughter may be is under siege, while simultaneously discovering that Xu Wenshan has been detained by Zhang Lijun's men as a "spreader of folk rumors."

Third Act: Revelation and Choice (90-120 minutes)

Sound Wave Discovery (20 minutes): Chen Yan and Xu Wenshan escape (using fire alarm sound waves to disrupt infected individuals) and test the sound wave theory during their flight. Key scene: An abandoned music conservatory, where they test the effect of different instruments on infected individuals. Visual poetry: The surreal image of infected individuals temporarily calming under guzheng sound waves, with dust dancing in Backlighting.

The Journey to the Plateau Laboratory (20 minutes): Heading to the Qinghai Lake research station, traversing infected zones. Signature shot: Drone aerial view of their off-road vehicle driving across the Gobi Desert, with slow-moving "shadow swarms"

in the distance like rivers.

The Final Confrontation and Sacrifice (20 minutes): The research station requires specific equipment, which is in Zhang Lijun's controlled safe zone. Chen Yan must return. Climactic scene: Chen Yan intentionally triggers the safe zone alarm, using himself as a sound source to draw infected individuals, allowing Xu Wenshan to infiltrate and retrieve the equipment. Visual impact: Slow-motion and normal speed intercut, with infected individuals surging like a tide toward Chen Yan in the clock tower.

Epilogue (10 minutes): Three months later, Xu Wenshan teaches children "silent sign language" in a rebuilt community. In the distance, Chen Yan (surviving but missing a leg) walks with his finally reunited wife Lin Wei along a field path. Final shot: Chen Yan stops, looking toward the horizon where threats still linger, but gripping his wife's hand. Open ending:

Final work

GRADEMARK REPORT

FINAL GRADE

75/100

GENERAL COMMENTS

Overall, this submission demonstrates an accomplished and distinctive piece of world-building that aligns very strongly with the brief, particularly in its integration of genre, culture, politics, and narrative structure.

The universe is clearly conceptualised, with a convincing scientific rationale for the zombie phenomenon and a thoughtful reworking of the genre through a specifically Chinese socio-cultural lens, which gives the project originality and depth.

Characters are well-positioned to embody ideological tensions between individual action, institutional control, and traditional knowledge, and the environments, technologies, and political evolutions are tightly interconnected, creating a believable and lived-in world.

The narrative structure is especially strong, showing clear cinematic awareness through detailed sequencing, visual framing, and pacing, which exceeds the brief's baseline expectations.

To strengthen the work further at Level 7, you could more explicitly critically reflect on your design decisions by referencing narrative theory, disaster studies, or comparable case studies in film and literature, and by justifying how your approach advances or challenges established genre conventions.

Nonetheless, this is a confident, ambitious, and professionally presented piece that demonstrates strong narrative design thinking and a clear

readiness for subsequent visual and animated world-building stages.

PAGE 1

PAGE 2

PAGE 3

PAGE 4

PAGE 5

PAGE 6

PAGE 7

PAGE 8

PAGE 9
