

Carefree 511

Chapter 511: Seeking Help

"Yang Guang..."

Wu Lu wanted to advise Yang Guang but all of a sudden, she saw something.

From upstairs, a pair of charred hands started to climb down towards them.

"Quickly go!"

Yang Guang shook Wu Lu off and pushed her away. "We'll split up!"

Even the sunlight outside could not provide them with any sense of security against the ghost.

"Let's go!"

Wu Lu was tearing up as she fled with Xiu Wen.

"How? How?"

Wu Lu wanted to jog slowly at first. Slowly, the jog became a sprint and with a slip, she fell to the ground and her tears were flowing out. "I will die soon! I don't want to end up like Bai Ling!"

"Don't worry Wu Lu, I will protect you!"

Xiu Wen pulled her from the ground. "Let's move quickly!"

"Thank you! Thank you, Xiu Wen!"

In that instant, Lu Xia's impression in Wu Lu's mind started to fade away and was slowly being replaced by Xiu Wen's smiling face.

"Driver! Stop the car!"

The two of them ran to the main road. Wu Lu's heart was about to jump out of her chest as she quickly hailed a cab.

"Where are the two of you going?"

"We're going to... The Ma Paranormal Detective Corporation, where Ma Wencai is!"

Wu Lu was at lost and could only recall what Yang Guang had once mentioned. "That detective... Yang Guang was already preparing to hire him for his services. We shall look for him and ask him to bring Yang Guang and the camera back from the apartment."

"The Ma Paranormal Detective Corporation? Alright!"

The driver stepped on the pedal and as the cab drove away, Wu Lu heaved a sigh of relief.

...

Within the Ma Detective Corporation, Fang Yuan had specially requested for a greenhouse so that he could attempt growing the plants he had brought out from the Ghost Garden.

He was now watering a green sunflower.

Being 20 years old, Fang Yuan had a graceful demeanour and the act of him watering the plants would give one a sense of serenity.

"Although its properties are weakened, at least I am able to grow them in the outside world now..."

Fang Yuan nodded in satisfaction as he gazed at a tomato with a human face engraved on it. Even though he was skilled in botany, the difficulty of growing plants out of their natural habitat was still great for Fang Yuan.

"The good thing is that I've finally succeeded... I have retained their properties and even altered their appearances so that they become more adapted to the outside world. At least normal people wouldn't get a shock when they see them!"

These plants had weird shapes at most, but they were not too shocking. Even Ma Xiaoling and Ma Wencai would occasionally come in to take a look at the plants.

"Unfortunately, there is a restriction on supernatural powers in this realm. Even for me, after becoming 10 times more powerful than the average human, I am unable to progress any further!"

Fang Yuan sighed.

The restriction on his stats was one of his biggest discoveries of this realm.

"The abnormal Purple Eye Realm, the restrictions on the stats window and the presence of ghosts are all related to each other... This realm is completely infiltrated by a high dimension energy from the Demonic Heart Realm! It is at least as high of a dimension as the being which robbed the dream dao from Da Qian!"

Only such a being had the ability to temporarily restrict lower-levelled beings of their stats and abilities.

"Furthermore... This form of energy is of a higher quality as compared to dream elemental force! Because of this, the ghosts here seems to be indestructible! They are harder to deal with as compared to Demon Spirits!"

"The mutated source of which this energy comes from might be related to the hallucination I experienced when entering the realm!"

Fang Yuan took a quick glance at his own stats:

"Name: Fang Yuan (Tantai Mieming)

Essence: 10.0 (100)

Spirit: 10.0 (100)

Magic: 10.0 (100)

Profession: Exorcist

Technique: Exorcism (Peak), Pharmacy (Peak), Eagle Claw Grappling Technique (Peak)

Skill: [Medicine (Level 3)], [Botany (Level 6)], [Fiery Golden Eyes (Level 1)], [Spirit Sealing Body (1st Grade)]"

'Spirit Sealing Body (1st Grade): Your body is a weapon which is able to seal evil ghosts. You will be able to seal any ghost that you come into contact with into your body! You have activated the 1st Grade, and the capacity for sealing evil ghosts: 1! You can choose to release the ghost!'

"15 years of living in seclusion and this is all I've got."

Exorcism and Pharmacy were secret techniques of the Tantai Family. Having the peak level of these techniques meant that even the elders in the Tantai family who specialised in these areas might not be better than Fang Yuan at it.

As for the Eagle Claw Grappling Technique, Fang Yuan had developed it based on his own martial arts experience, combining it with the grappling techniques of this realm to create a whole new technique.

With his physical abilities 10 times stronger than the average human, he could well be regarded as the superman of this realm!

"Unfortunately, with my abilities, I am still only able to exorcise the low-levelled ghosts. It seems like it is time for me to improve my Spirit Sealing Body, huh?"

Fang Yuan placed the watering can down and seemed a little vexed.

To speak the truth, even though Ma Wencai's reputation had gone up and even though there were many more cases now, paranormal cases were still the minority.

Ma Xiaoling grew up with the natural gift of the Yin Yang Eye. With Fang Yuan's guidance, she became an elite exorcist and most of the time, she could accomplish the task on her own without Fang Yuan's help.

The few times which she needed Fang Yuan's help were the few times which benefited Fang Yuan a lot. These were the times Fang Yuan could conduct his research, confirm his predictions and collect data.

"Ghosts which appear in the form of spirits are the low-levelled ghosts and I can exorcise them directly. Of course, this would not mean that they are killed off immediately. Because of the fact that ghosts are indestructible, in another 10 years up to a hundred years, they will be recreated. Even so, I will still need to do my best to exorcise them with the help of the exorcism technique and the concoctions from the Tantai Family."

According to Fang Yuan's own observations, he had classified ghosts into 4 levels, namely Spirit, Murderous, Strange and Wuyin[1]!

The Spirit Level represented the lowest-levelled ghosts. They would appear and kill humans in the spirit form. However, they were not able to split themselves into more than a single entity and were bounded by many other restrictions.

The Murderous Level would be a level higher. Ghosts in this level would be able to turn invisible or split themselves up. They would be able to alter a human's memories as well and if a normal human were to encounter a ghost at the Murderous Level, they would only be played to death!

The Strange Level would represent an even more terrorising presence. Ghosts at this level would be able to kill a human in many different ways. If such a ghost were to hear a person's name, the person would be cursed and doomed. The ghost would warp time and space in an attempt to alter reality or even kill the person in their dreams! It would be able to kill the person while tricking the person into thinking that he or she was still alive!

However, ghosts from both the Murderous Level or Strange Level would come from a source. Even if the source might reside in another space or dimension, as long the source existed, there would be hope in dealing with these ghosts!

The final level would be the Wuyin Level. Ghosts at this level would leave the entire realm in despair! There was no way in dealing with these ghosts! No way to get rid of them! Furthermore, they do not come from any source! This would mean that there was no solution to wipe out these ghosts! These ghosts would be the curse of an entire realm!

In Fang Yuan's memories, only the cursed bronze door of the Tantai Family might be able to match up to the level of such a ghost!

"A normal human would already stand little chance against a normal Spirit Level ghost and exorcists would already have to be careful. In encountering a Murderous Level ghost, even the Tantai Family will have to take it seriously. For a ghost of the Strange Level, anyone will have to avoid them at all costs..."

As for the Wuyin Level, even Fang Yuan could not be certain if ghosts of such level existed. This was only his prediction. However, if a ghost of such a level would appear, it would mean the destruction of an entire realm!

"According to the Tantai Family, 1 in 5 blood-related descendants of the Tantai Family will have an awakened ability to become a normal exorcist. His ability will allow him to deal with a Spirit Level ghost. Against a Murderous Level curse, a few elite exorcists will have to combine forces and even so, the outcome of the exorcism will still be uncertain. Only the most powerful of exorcists will stand a chance against the paranormal beings of the Strange Level! Unfortunately, most of them will end up dying against such a powerful paranormal presence!"

Fang Yuan knew that his abilities were already much more powerful than any exorcist of the Tantai Family. However, he still felt that he was too weak to resolve the problem of the bronze door.

"Indeed... The only way is to increase my cultivation of my Spirit Sealing Body!"

He sighed once more as he realised that this was the plan the realm had for him. He was the realm's final hope!

"Eh?"

Suddenly, Fang Yuan looked towards the office. "Finally, a troubling case!"

...

In the office, Ma Xiaoling was tending to Wu Lu and Xiu Wen.

"Please have a cup of coffee!"

A tall and sweet-looking girl in a pink apron carried two cups of coffee into the office before knocking on the table. "Father... We have clients!"

"Mmm..."

Behind the table, Ma Wencai raised his head from the newspapers and wiped the saliva off his lips before yawning. "It's two students? Didn't I tell you that I, the Great Detective Ma Wencai, will not attend to these normal cases?!"

"Father!"

Ma Xiaoling playfully chopped Ma Wencai's head with her hand before turning around to smile. "Please don't mind him. I'm Detective Ma's assistant and you can call me Xiaoling. Now... Let us begin!"

She took her apron off, revealing a white suit inside. Unfazed, Ma Xiaoling took her notebook out.

"Are you guys... up to it?"

Wu Lu started to sweat profusely. Why did Ma Wencai resemble Li Yuan so much? Both of them didn't seem too reliable.

"Don't worry, we are professional. Please ignore my father! In the corporation, he is the weakest among us."

Ma Xiaoling smiled.

"Ring!"

At this point in time, Fang Yuan opened the door. "Why didn't you call me?"

"These two clients claimed to have been pestered by a ghost!"

Ma Xiaoling appeared serious as Ma Wencai felt a chill going down his spine.

Ma Wencai knew Fang Yuan's abilities. The fact that Ma Xiaoling required Fang Yuan's help this time meant that this case was an important one.

"This time might be a real ghost and a curse! I was about to look for you!"

Ma Xiaoling passed the photograph to Fang Yuan.

"Mmm..."

Fang Yuan scanned through the photograph quickly before tossing it on the table and stretching his leg out.

"You..."

Initially, Wu Lu was full of anticipation. Seeing how Fang Yuan reacted, Wu Lu became infuriated. "What kind of attitude is this?"

"Sigh... If a normal person is unable to detect it, so be it. Xiaoling, you have the ability of the Yin Yang Eye and have already been my apprentice for so long. How can you not detect anything?"

Fang Yuan gave a look of disappointment.

"What should I be looking out for?"

Xiaoling looked at the photograph, confused.

"The photograph... There's one more person!"

[1]: Wuyin means 'Without a reason or cause'.

Chapter 512: The Source

"Is there... one more person?"

Hearing that, she focused on the photograph and took out a small bottle of liquid before scattering it on the photograph.

"Sizzle!"

A layer of fog appeared. Only then did she realise that the group photo only consisted of 4 people!

The fifth 'person' was a charred and ferocious looking - evil ghost!

"This position..."

Ma Xiaoling suddenly raised her head and splashed the concoction in her hands. "Miss Wu, be careful!"

Wu Lu remained stunned as she gazed at Xiu Wen.

The boy whom she had slowly grown in love with became emotionless and slowly turned black. Within moments, he had turned into an entire charred corpse!

"Ahhhh!"

With a shriek, the black corpse disappeared before them.

"Why... why must it be him..."

Wu Lu sobbed silently. Suddenly, her mind went blank before her real memories came flooding back.

That's right! There were only 4 of them who went to the apartment! Lu Xia, Yang Guang, Bai Ling and herself! It was weird for there to be another person.

However, none of them even suspected anything!

This was because this ghost had altered their memories, forcing a 'Xiu Wen' into their minds.

To think about it, the cursed photograph was brought out of the apartment by Xiu Wen!

Furthermore, it was also Xiu Wen's idea to visit Master Liu! He knew all along that Master Liu was a quack and would not be able to help with the situation. With that, it resulted in Bai Ling's death!

"No... It's not like this... I remember seeing Xiu Wen and the ghost at the same time..."

Wu Lu shook her head and was on the verge of breaking down.

"It's simple... He either forced you to hallucinate seeing both him and the ghost, or that he has the ability to split himself!"

Fang Yuan turned serious as a gold hue flashed in his eyes.

Such a ghost with the ability to split itself and alter one's memories to toy with humans was already beyond the Spirit Level. It was a Murderous Level ghost!

Even a strong exorcist would have to be careful when dealing with a ghost of such a level!

"A Murderous Level ghost will be able to split itself into multiple entities. If we do not get hold of its source, we will not be able to deal with it! This ghost is harder to deal with compared to the one at the Chen Residences!"

Fang Yuan licked his lips. "This is also a good thing... A ghost of such a level is worthy for me to seal!"

His cultivation was already as high as the realm would allow it to be. If he wanted to become strong enough to deal with more powerful ghosts and curses, he had to increase his cultivation in his Spirit Sealing Body!

After exploring, Fang Yuan realised that the only requirement he had to fulfil to increase the cultivation of his Spirit Sealing Body was that he had to seal powerful ghosts and curses!

"Why..."

Wu Lu sobbed on the sofa, motionless. "Why... why do you want to toy with us?"

After experiencing a series of shocks, she had lost all hope for the world.

"Do you think you can help the situation just by crying?"

Fang Yuan glanced at her. "Let us discuss the price to pay for dealing with this 'ghost'! Because this ghost is already a 2nd Level ghost, we will require a higher price!"

"Be it my money, my life or my everything, I am willing to give it to you!"

Wu Lu shuddered before she gritted her teeth with determination. "As long as you will help me... take revenge!"

"Such a realisation... is this her final struggle as a survivor?"

Fang Yuan stood up and shrugged his shoulders. "Forget it... I understand. Leave the rest to me!"

"Daughter!"

At this point in time, Detective Ma finally snapped out of his trance as he cowardly hid behind his daughter. "You must protect Father and chase the ghost who dare to infiltrate our corporation out!"

After becoming rich, Ma Wencai naturally bought the entire corporation and transformed it into his own business.

What would happen if this place were to become haunted? It would be a disaster!

Detective Ma, a money grubber, would rather die with all the wealth he could possibly have.

"..."

Ma Xiaoling rolled her eyes. She held a test tube in her hands and scanned her surroundings with alertness.

This evil ghost was powerful enough to be able to escape detection from her Yin Yang Eye all along. Now that it had disappeared, she was unable to trace it. The ghost now gave her a grave sense of danger.

"The real Murderous Level ghost will not need to appear in order to kill. It will be able to silence someone while remaining invisible... If humans were to encounter ghosts of such a level, they would stand almost no chance. However, this does not include me!"

Fang Yuan walked in a circle and the gold hue in his eyes started to flash brilliantly.

"Whoosh!"

In an instant, Fang Yuan made his way behind Wu Lu and struck a punch out. "Heavenly Eagle Fist!"

"Chirp! Chirp!"

As Fang Yuan struck his fist out, the joints in his body started to crackle under an extreme force and his blood started to surge quickly, turning him into a human fireball with his core temperature rising up continuously. In an instant, the entire office turned into a furnace.

Even though Fang Yuan was unable to restore his cultivation as a True Divine, there was still a hint of a True Divine's willpower in his martial arts.

"Bang!"

A dull collision sound was heard as 'something' was being smashed behind Wu Lu. The 3 others in the office did not detect anything before Fang Yuan had landed his fist.

"That's it!"

As soon as the ghost was being hit by Fang Yuan, Ma Xiaoling could vaguely see an illusionary shadow. With that, she poured the concoction in her hands towards the shadow. "Reveal yourself!"

A charred corpse appeared as soon as the concoction landed on it. It was the ferocious ghost which Wu Lu and company had seen in the apartment! On its fours, the corpse was crawling about.

"Ahhh!"

Ma Wencai and Wu Lu screamed at the top of their lungs.

While they were still in shock, Fang Yuan took another step forward and forcefully stepped on the head of the charred corpse.

"Bang!"

The charred head exploded and the corpse disappeared once more.

"Is it dead?"

Ma Xiaoling remained dazed as she witnessed all that had happened.

Even she feared for her life the moment she saw this ghost. How could Fang Yuan so simply kill it with a single stomp?

Although she knew that Fang Yuan was powerful, she never knew that Fang Yuan was this powerful!

"No... It's not enough!"

Fang Yuan shook his head. Taking a few more steps, he rushed towards a wall and struck his fist out once more.

"Ohhh! No!!! That is my oil painting from the Renaissance period!"

Under Ma Wecai's shout, the painting and the wall behind it crumbled like sand. The charred corpse appeared once more and was being hit before it turned invisible again.

"Anger? Hatred? In bringing desolation to the world, what exactly are you?"

In the office, Fang Yuan whizzed about and was always fast enough to be able to catch the ghost. Every single time he encountered the ghost, he would use his brute force to smash it.

The 3 of them looked at Fang Yuan fighting the ghost and were utterly stunned.

"Being a split entity, this ghost will need time to restore its form..."

Fang Yuan was extremely clear about this. Every time he had hit the ghost, the ghost would need increased time to restore its form and now, it was taking up to 20 minutes.

"You've proved me wrong. You are not the end of the world. You are only a pile of mess!"

With a flying leap, Fang Yuan arrived at the main door of the office and stretched his hands out, strangling the charred corpse by its neck. "Dissipate!"

"Crackle!"

This split entity of a powerful ghost was being split into two!

Ma Xiaoling shivered. Quickly, the sinister vibes in the office faded away.

"It's done!"

Fang Yuan dusted his hands and walked towards a stunned Wu Lu. "We have some time now. Bring me to the apartment! Let's deal with its source once and for all!"

"Al... Alright!"

Wu Lu stared at Fang Yuan as though he was a God.

Just as she was forced to desperation, such a saviour would deserve her admiration and respect as she became a crazed believer of Fang Yuan. "Thank you! Thank you, Master!"

"Instead of saying all these, why not get moving? According to you, you have another friend who is heading to the apartment, right?"

Fang Yuan glanced at her.

Fang Yuan was merely joking when he mentioned the price to pay for his services.

To Fang Yuan, the source of the Murderous Level ghost and the camera would be the real reward for helping her!

"Right, there's Yang Guang too!"

Wu Lu revealed a look of uneasiness on her face.

...

At the same time, outside the apartment.

Yang Guang was determined to destroy the camera no matter what.

However, the nearer he approached the apartment, the stronger the sinister vibes were. His determination quickly faded away and all the fear he had accumulated since the beginning seemed to have exploded inside him in an instant.

Finally, he could see the apartment from afar.

"Bai Ling..."

Yang Guang clenched his teeth and walked into the apartment.

In the dim environment, his muscles contracted and his heartbeat started to escalate. Unknowingly, his teeth started to chatter as well.

He was getting nearer and nearer!

As he arrived closer to where they had thrown the camera, his memories started to return.

"Xiu Wen... Something is not right, there isn't even a Xiu Wen to begin with!"

Yang Guang felt dizzy all of a sudden. "He is... a ghost! He has been with us all this while! Was he the one who killed Bai Ling too?"

Such a blow caused tears to well up in his eyes.

"Wu Lu! Wu Lu is in danger!"

As the person who was being targeted by the photograph and the fact that she was with the ghost all along, Wu Lu was like walking on a tightrope.

"This is the best chance! If I destroy the camera, I might be able to save Wu Lu!"

Since he was sure that the ghost was with Wu Lu all along, Yang Guang could now feel a burst of courage in him as he rushed into the room in the apartment.

Everything was in the same place since the day they took the group photograph and the camera was still on the shelf.

"That's it!"

Yang Guang scanned the surroundings before taking a step forward. He held the camera in his hands and flung it towards the wall!

"Crack!"

The camera shattered and parts of it flew in different directions. There was also a visible crack on the wall where the camera had hit.

"It's that simple?"

Yang Guang was in disbelief. How could he have destroyed the camera so easily?

"Regardless, the camera is now destroyed. The curse on the photograph should now be lifted, right?"

Before he could leave, a distinct crackle was heard.

Yang Guang froze in his steps. Forcefully, he turned his head around and saw... the wall which they had used as a background to take the photograph started to crumble, revealing a charred corpse in it!

The real source of the curse was never from the normal-looking camera, but... in this wall!

Chapter 513: Seal the Spirit

A Murderous Level ghost would be able to split itself.

Fang Yuan had only destroyed one of its entities.

This time, the 'truth' behind the crumbled wall was the source of everything!

"Ahhhh!"

Yang Guang shrieked and ran away as fast as possible.

"Rumble!"

The surroundings started to change. From an abandoned apartment, it slowly turned into the scene of a fire outbreak.

It was the same apartment but the furniture was all brand new. The scorching flames started to spread everywhere, even towards the corridors.

The intense inferno and thick black smoke filled Yang Guang's lungs as he began to feel discomfort. Immediately, he started to crouch on the floor and crawled towards safety.

"Could this be... the fire which this apartment had once experienced before? Why was the corpse hidden in the wall? Could it be possible that the property developer was hiding the truth from the media by sealing the corpse up in order to increase the value of this apartment?"

Yang Guang held his nose and carefully made his way around the apartment as he finally understood everything.

The apartment was rented to foreigners. These foreigners did not have a strong backing or good relationships with the locals. Therefore, even if they were to disappear or die, no one would know or miss them!

From all the signs, this was the most reasonable explanation.

"So what if I'm able to deduce all these?"

Yang Guang gazed at the raging inferno around him and felt that even his eyebrows were about to be burnt.

"Mum..."

"Save me..."

...

He could hear the screams for help and the struggles coming from the burning inferno as Yang Guang started to shiver in fear. "Something's not right... there might be more than 1 casualty in this fire!"

Even though he could deduce this, there was nothing he could do.

"The window... If I cannot escape by the door, I can try the windows!"

Although he didn't know how he had landed himself in the scene of a burning apartment, Yang Guang only had a single thought, and it was to survive!

The intensifying flames were distracting him, affecting his consciousness.

Finally, after crawling for a long while, a window appeared before him.

"This is great!"

He stood up and slammed the window hard to no avail, for it was locked.

"Sh*t!"

Behind him, there were all sorts of cries.

Yang Guang covered his face with a cloth and ran straight into the window.

"Crackle!"

He was an athlete in university and was strong to begin with. With that headbutt, he shattered the window and flew out of the apartment.

"Ahhh!"

As he cried, he tried to pluck out the shards embedded in his arms before examining his surroundings.

The flames were no longer there. It was as though all that had just happened was a mere illusion.

"I have survived!"

Yang Guang examined the apartment and shivered in fear before running away. "That camera is perfectly fine! The real source of trouble is this apartment and the wronged souls who were burnt to death here!"

After knowing this piece of important information, he knew that if he were to look into this, he would be able to lift the curse and set things right by making the one responsible for the fire to bear the consequences!

"Just that... why do I feel like I've become heavier?"

Yang Guang recalled that there seemed to be something riding on his back while he was crawling on the ground just now!

He shuddered and turned around as he came face to face with a charred face.

"Ahhhhhh!"

Yang Guang screamed hysterically. As soon as he woke up, he realised that he was being trapped in darkness.

"Director, this isn't too good! By hiding a corpse in the wall... it's too unethical..."

"Do you know how much the company has lost after this fire? We don't even have enough money to compensate the affected families! Who would have the time to deal with these corpses?"

"But... the police..."

"There are just a few foreigners. There's nothing much in sealing them up in the walls. Don't worry, we have already bribed the news agencies. They will not report the true casualty rate!"

...

"This is... the wall which the corpses are buried in?"

Yang Guang wanted to struggle. However, the space around him was filled with cement and darkness and his movements were restricted.

Furthermore, a feeling of breathlessness started to overwhelm him.

"No... I am alive! Don't bury me!"

He tried to shout but nothing came out of his mouth.

Finally, his eyes were shut and he fell into an abyss of darkness...

...

"Yang Guang... is dead!"

Fang Yuan and Wu Lu had arrived at the apartment.

They arrived at the room and realised that the camera was destroyed. They also noticed the crumbled wall and the shape of a human body indented in the wall!

"It is useless to deal with the split entities. We need to target its true source..."

Fang Yuan stretched his right hand out to feel the indentation on the wall and could feel a burning sensation in it.

"Is this where... the source once was?"

He examined the surroundings. Suddenly, the space around them transformed into a burning inferno once again and thick smoke started to spread everywhere.

"Ahhhh!"

Wu Lu screamed as soon as she realised where she was.

"Don't worry. We are merely being pulled into an alternate dimension..."

Fang Yuan snickered.

If the 'ghost' was hiding its source and was only sending out its split entities, it would be troublesome for Fang Yuan. It would take up too much effort for one to even locate the exact location of the alternate dimension.

But now, it had intentionally pulled Fang Yuan and Wu Lu into its own dimension and therefore had unintentionally caused its own death.

Oh wait, a ghost was already dead from the beginning, so there was no death it could cause to itself.

"Cough cough... will I... die here?"

Wu Lu held her chest in pain as she sat on the ground.

In the alternate dimension, these flames were real flames. If they were engulfed by the smoke, they would truly die as well!

Suddenly, from the flames, charred corpses began to appear. They varied in size but all of them had hatred in their eyes as they surrounded Fang Yuan and Wu Lu.

"Was the powerful curse created from the hatred of these wronged souls who died in the fire?"

Fang Yuan nodded his head and a streak of chilly energy started to surround him.

A chill which would be able to freeze one's soul started to spread out and within a few moments, it had covered the entire house.

The flames disappeared in that instant and even the toxic fumes were slowly being dissipated.

"Impressive!"

Wu Lu stood up and was shocked. As she looked at Fang Yuan, she shuddered in fear.

"Are you scared of me?"

Fang Yuan glanced at her before taking a quick look at his own stats window.

In the brackets behind his Spirit Sealing Body, a new status appeared: Spirit Sealing Body (Partially released!)

"If I release the ghost entirely, I will likely lose control of it and thereby allow it to target me. If I were to release it partially, it would mean for me to release the seal by a little, harnessing the power of the ghost in me or even make use of its abilities! It feels like I'm borrowing my strength from something else."

Fang Yuan could feel a chilly sensation spreading from his body as he started to smile.

This technique was discovered by him after all these years.

Looking at his personality, if he did not perform enough research on the Spirit Sealing Body, he would not have recklessly increased its cultivation.

"There are still risks involved when I use my human body to control the power of a ghost! I not only have to deal with the risk of the ghost attempting to take over me, I will have to watch out for myself being harmed in the process as well... However, my body is already not as weak as a normal human, but as powerful as the realm allows me to be! If I will still be harmed by such physical conditions, I will just be a mere laughing stock even if I am the realm's final hope!"

Of course, Wu Lu did not know what Fang Yuan was thinking.

Nervously, she gazed at Fang Yuan. The young man Fang Yuan once was started to turn pale and his face turned into a green-purple hue. His pair of eyes turned into a brilliant gold.

Anyone would feel the chills if they were to look at Fang Yuan, for it would be as though they were looking at... a real 'ghost'!

"I see you!"

Fang Yuan revealed a sinister smile.

By harnessing the power of the evil ghost sealed in and using his Fiery Golden Eyes, he could see through the alternate dimension, to where the source of the ghost was.

"Scan... Locate..... The next step will be to... capture!"

His body turned illusionary in an instant and his arms turned greenish-purple as though he was a frozen corpse. With that, he stretched his arms into mid-air.

In the depths of the alternate dimension.

An indescribable and unknown presence was being captured!

Even an exorcist could only deal with the simplest spirits!

But now, Fang Yuan was able to capture the source of a... Murderous Level ghost!

"Come out!"

Fang Yuan exclaimed.

Wu Lu's eyes were wide opened as she witnessed Fang Yuan 'pulling' out a charred corpse from mid-air.

Even a single look at the charred corpse caused extreme pain in her eyes and fear began to overwhelm her.

The true source of the ghost could not be described and did not have a definite shape.

"Seal!"

In Fang Yuan's chest, a silver swirl appeared and the entire charred corpse was being swallowed into it.

Of course, the Murderous Level ghost was struggling in Fang Yuan's arms. Unfortunately, Fang Yuan remained emotionless as he absorbed the corpse. Slowly, the corpse became smaller and smaller and finally, it became a small black dot which completely disappeared in the swirl.

"Phew..."

Fang Yuan took in a deep breath and sealed the ghosts in him completely, reverting himself to the appearance of a normal human.

The space around them started to warp, transforming itself into the abandoned apartment it once was.

After sealing the 'source', the curse on the apartment was completely lifted!

Fang Yuan took a quick glance at this stats:

"Name: Fang Yuan (Tantai Mieming)

Essence: 15.0 (100)

Spirit: 15.0 (100)

Magic: 15.0 (100)

Profession: Exorcist

Technique: Exorcism (Peak), Pharmacy (Peak), Eagle Claw Grappling Technique (Peak)

Skill: [Medicine (Level 3)], [Botany (Level 6)], [Fiery Golden Eyes (Level 1)], [Spirit Sealing Body (2nd Grade)]"

'Spirit Sealing Body (2nd Grade): Your body is a weapon which is able to seal evil ghosts. You will be able to seal any ghost that you come into contact with into your body! You have activated the 2nd Grade, and the capacity for sealing evil ghosts: 2! You can choose to release the ghost!'

"I am able to increase the physical limitations of my body just by sealing this ghost?"

Fang Yuan was a little shocked. "I am truly the Fate Soul of this realm! My existence cannot be comprehended with normal logic!"

Chapter 514: Two People

"It's a pity... not every ghost deserves to be sealed by me!"

Fang Yuan thought about the ghost in the Chen Residences.

In the past few years, it had turned into Fang Yuan's punching bag. The last time Fang Yuan had attacked it, it was too severely injured that it no longer appeared in recent years.

"Of course, all of these experiences did serve me well."

Fang Yuan gazed at Wu Lu and his eyes glistened. "Release!"

Wu Lu involuntarily took a step back.

From her point of view, 6 burn scars lined Fang Yuan's face and his eyes turned bloodshot.

"This Murderous Level ghost is... rather useful!"

Under the red glow coming from the ghost, Wu Lu appeared dazed.

"I am now able to infiltrate the mind of others and alter their memories... This is rather similar to that of a dream master!"

Fang Yuan immediately released the ability of the Murderous Level ghost from this apartment.

"Now, return to school and forget everything that has happened!"

Fang Yuan was already well-versed in tampering with the memories of others as he directly altered them. "Yang Guang and the 2 others died from an accident!"

"They... died from an accident!"

Wu Lu mumbled to herself as she appeared dazed. Slowly, she walked out of the apartment like a zombie.

"It isn't good for her to keep these memories... sigh, I'm such a kind person!"

Fang Yuan rubbed his chin. "However... the curse of the 'Door' is still beyond my comprehension!"

He raised his hands and his face was still that of the Murderous Level ghost from the apartment. A chilly vibe started to spread from his hands and his skin turned dark-purple.

"I have no problem in releasing different abilities from different ghosts at the same time... Is the curse created by the Tantai Family so weak?"

Fang Yuan had long detected the anomaly in the ghost within his body.

The being which the Tantai Family had placed their hopes on needed to be at least a 'Strange' Level and therefore of a certain power.

However, this ghost was just too weak!

"This is the result of being damaged by the 'Door'!"

Fang Yuan subconsciously recalled the scene where he escaped from the Tantai Family.

The 20-year cycle was about to return and the appearance of the 'Door' would kill off all the descendants of the Tantai Family!

"The ghost which I had released not only dealt with the elders of the Tantai Family, it was also being targeted by the Door. Therefore, it gave me time to escape"

Fang Yuan appeared solemn.

He knew that at that point in time, even if he was able to escape from the Tantai Family, the Door would never have let him pass. He was only able to smoothly escape because of the ghost. The ghost had become a scapegoat for Fang Yuan, giving him enough time to make his escape.

"Even so, how could this 'Strange' Level ghost end up as a mere 'Murderous' Level ghost after being severely injured?"

'Strange' meant that the ghost would be strange and unpredictable!

This experience of toying with humans and altering their memories was only a child's play.

The truly strange and unpredictable act would be, for instance, warping time and space, messing around with karma and even making one think that he was alive even after killing him!

Even a top-notch exorcist would die without knowing why it encountered a Strange Level ghost.

"Anything that is Strange would affect the entire area. If it appears, it will affect hundreds or even thousands of people... and the effect might last for over a hundred years, affecting the descendants of those affected as well..."

As for why there was so little information about such beings, Fang Yuan predicted that these Strange beings had the ability to control information over a large area. Therefore, they were able to alter all news, reports and even the attention of the humans within the area, allowing them to be unaware of these obvious 'anomalies'!

"Such Strange beings... it will be rare to encounter them."

Fang Yuan felt that if anyone else, even exorcists, were to hear his theory, they would most probably think that he was mad.

These were things which others did not want to encounter. However, he wanted to actively seek for such a presence.

"It's a pity... I don't know where to start. Do I really need to explore the entire world?"

Fang Yuan sighed. "I could probably expand Ma Wencai's reputation and even release some information regarding his identity... in an attempt to attract even more exorcists here!"

To him, this was no longer a period of staying low.

Before the 20-year cycle returned, he had to attempt to seal as many ghosts as possible to increase his own abilities! For the final showdown!

For that, his initial plan of hiding in Ma Wencai's office would no longer work out. He had to immerse himself into the community of exorcists of this world.

Fang Yuan slowly mulled over his own future as he casually hailed a cab and returned to the Ma Paranormal Detective Corporation.

"How did it go?"

Ma Xiaoling welcomed Fang Yuan back as she gazed at her friend-cum-teacher nervously.

"Don't worry... it's been settled!"

Fang Yuan revealed a relaxed smile.

"That's great..."

Ma Xiaoling patted her chest and heaved a deep breath. "That female student is such a poor thing..."

"Instead of talking about her, why not think about what we should eat for dinner."

Fang Yuan casually retorted and Ma Wencai nodded his head violently. It was obvious that he was hungry too.

"Alright! I shall cook up a feast tonight!"

Ma Xiaoling's culinary skills were rather impressive, especially after Fang Yuan's guidance. She could go out and become a chef and no one would suspect anything. As soon as she donned her apron, she seemed to have transformed into a different person. "I shall bake a cake first. If any of you are hungry, you can have that as an appetizer."

...

Just as Fang Yuan was enjoying Xiaoling's strawberry cake.

A long train slowly came to a halt as it arrived at a station. A male in a brown jacket wearing a cap and carrying a suitcase walked out to the station platform.

"My home... Never would I have thought that I will return here!"

His right eye had an obvious knife scar which gave him a ferocious look. Fortunately, he did not go blind because of the scar.

"Hey... Brother, Sister-in-law, it's me! Bingqi!"

He came to a public phone, tossed a coin in and dialled a number. "I heard about Xia's death! He is still my nephew no matter what! Funeral? I won't be going already. It isn't a good thing if I were to meet up with you guys now! Didn't I say that we have to cut all ties before?"

Lu Bingqi cut the call even though there were sounds of crying on the other side. With that, his expression turned into a stern one. "Regardless if it is a person or a 'thing', as long as you touch my nephew, I will make you pay! Even if it means costing my life!"

"Ahh!"

At this point in time, Lu Bingqi suddenly held his right eye as blood seeped through his fingers.

"It's... It's coming again!"

He lowered his palm, revealing his bloodied right eye. Scarily, this eye suddenly turned white.

Lu Bingqi closed his left eye. With only his right eye, he could see a shadow flashing by across the public phone.

"It's... that thing! It has followed me all the way here!"

In that instant, Lu Bingqi could see scratch marks as the entire public phone booth crumbled. Blood started to flow from it, turning the entire place into a pool of blood.

"Run!"

Calmly, he pushed the glass door of the booth open and fled.

"This person..."

"He's crazy!"

"Did he see a ghost?"

...

The people who were queuing behind him could only see a weird man stumbling his way out of the telephone booth as though he was running for his life.

"Rumble!"

In the next moment, a huge truck out of control rammed into the telephone booth, crumbling it.

The few who could not escape in time turned into a pile of bloodied mess. Their limbs flew about and blood spewed everywhere.

"Weewoo Weewooo!"

Not long after, the fire engine and ambulance had arrived at the scene and got to work immediately.

From a corner not far away, Lu Bingqi witnessed everything as his right eye slowly turned to normal. "It has killed another 3 people... It is too reckless!"

It was a shock for him to encounter such a scene as soon as he returned to his homeland.

"Time passes very quickly. It has been 5 to 6 years since then... Never would I have thought that I will return home under such circumstances!"

Lu Bingqi zipped up his windbreaker and disappeared among the crowd.

...

"Master..."

At the same time, a person dressed up as a monk started to walk away from the station. As he witnessed the bloody scene, he closed his eyes and started to recite a mantra. "Many of you have died in inexplicable ways. However, I have instructions from my Master to resolve the issue at hand. If I am able to survive that, I will surely return to perform a ritual for all of you to find peace! Namu Amitufo!"

"Hey... monk, where are you going?"

A cab driver smiled. "I can bring you there!"

"Please don't. I have legs and it is already wrong for me to take the train this time... Since I have arrived at my destination, I need to complete the journey by walking!"

"Keke, what a monk! You are as stupid as those Masters!"

The cab driver smiled. "Where are you going? I can give you the general direction!"

"I will be thankful for that! I am going to the Chen Residences of the Red River Village!"

The young monk placed his hands together. "Do you happen to know where it is?"

"Chen Residences? Are you after the bounty? If that is so, you're late..."

"Bounty?"

The monk was stunned. "I have no idea about that. Please elaborate, if you will."

In his heart, he was shocked. 'Master had gone down the wrong path and was confused by a curse. Since then, he had sinned too many times. As his disciple, I cannot follow his path and I can only try to make it up for his wrongdoings. The issue at the Chen Residences was taken over from Master as well... sigh, since the wrongdoing has already been committed, it is already too late to regret!"

"Alright!"

Since the cab driver was had no business, he did not mind a small chat. With that, he started to explain everything that happened in the Chen Residences and the young monk was in disbelief.

"The ghost has been discovered? The government sealed up the residences? The paranormal issue in the residences had been resolved? The Ma Paranormal Detective Corporation?"

Chapter 515: The Monk

The Chen Residences.

Ever since news of the ghost appearing in the residences spread, the price of property around the residences plunged. Not long after, the government had intervened to seal up the place and there were a few strange scientists conducting investigations in the residences every now and then.

Unfortunately, 3 to 4 years ago, the ghost had already disappeared. After many rounds of investigations, the researchers and scientists had to concur with the results. They had shifted most of their manpower away and only left 1 to security guards to guard the place.

"Sigh... this is boring. When will days like this end?"

In a police post before the Chen Residences, a young policeman yawned. "I've heard that this place was haunted! Is that so?"

"Hehe... Don't think about it!"

Beside him, a middle-aged policeman took a deep breath on his cigar. "At that time... you wouldn't know how scary it was inside. Whoever entered the residences will die a gruesome death... At that time, we would draw lots to decide who to take the shift here."

"Could there be... a real ghost?"

The young policeman took a quick look at the abandoned residences and shivered in fear

"What else do you think there was?"

The middle-aged policeman scoffed. "Our task now is much simpler. We just have to prevent all the reckless paranormal lovers from entering... Although there is no danger in the residences now, no one can be absolutely sure. In fact, we are only here to remind them of the possible dangers. If they are still stubborn, then there's nothing we can do."

"Wait up..... I think I see one of them!"

The young man rubbed his eyes as he looked at a person dressed up as a monk walking into the residences.

"F*ck, are my eyes playing tricks on me? He's walking really fast!"

"No... This person seems real, I can see him too!"

The middle-aged policeman nodded his head solemnly. "This person seems to be a true Master with some cultivation!"

"What should we do? Should we follow him?"

"We'll go back to sleep!"

The middle-aged policeman rolled his eyes. "This Master might not be afraid of ghosts, but we sure are! What if something happens inside? They will surely blame it on us! The only thing we should do now is to prepare a report!"

"Chen Residences!"

At this point in time, the young monk had arrived at the residences and a look of sorrow was displayed on his face. "That fateful year... my Master became evil and coincidentally encountered Chen Xinbo who was grieving over his daughter's death. Therefore, he made use of Chen Xinbo to nurture a ghost!"

His Master was a powerful monk and a respectable one too. However, because of something bad that had happened to him, his personality changed and he turned evil.

Of course, Chen Xinbo wouldn't know all of these. Instead, he wholeheartedly trusted the monk and did not bury his daughter's remains. Instead, he had put in place a ritual in hopes of recalling his daughter's soul back.

However, it was not long before another monk found out about this Master's doings. This Master had unfortunately died and was not able to rectify all of these here, which resulted in a tragedy.

"Amitufo... I am unable to complete the ritual to allow the wronged souls to seek peace. I can only recite the Rebirth in Pure Land Mantra 999 times to strengthen the seal... but now..."

He examined the surroundings. Although everywhere was in a mess, there were no sinister vibes.

"This is the place where the ritual to recall the soul was conducted, right?"

Following his gut feelings, he arrived at the second floor before entering the room where the ritual was conducted.

The room was already in a mess. Remains of the corpse or even their property were already taken away by the authorities for further investigation.

"The ghost... it is indeed being dealt with already!"

The young monk examined the surroundings and heaved a sigh of relief. "This is a good deed!" I shall engrave the words of the Mantra of Vajrasattva in the vicinity to allow this evil ghost to remain in hibernation for an even longer period of time... Could Ma Wencai be a monk who specialises in exorcism too?"

He initially thought that this would be a perilous task. Never would he knew that he would accomplish it so easily.

The monk was jubilant and started to appreciate Ma Wencai for what he had done.

Buddhism was all about karma.

This was something which his Master had caused and therefore it was something he had to return. If someone else helped him resolved the issue, although the problem at the Chen Residences would have been resolved, he would have to repay the favour.

"Eh? That master is coming out!"

In the police post, the two policemen wanted to chase after him. Suddenly, they were being attracted by the happenings in the Chen Family.

In there, one of the walls suddenly started to glow in a brilliant gold hue as engraved runes filled the walls. In an instant, the glow dimmed and became no more.

"A Master! A true Master indeed!"

The young policeman gasped. Unfortunately, before he could go up to the monk, the monk was long gone.

...

"It will be good to establish good ties with them!"

The monk was extremely quick as he moved. However, he was able to retain his calm composure as he rushed his way, which was indeed impressive.

"The issue at Chen Residences is settled. Next up will be to pay a visit to the Ma Paranormal Detective Corporation!"

He mumbled to himself but soon after, he appeared confused. "Ma Wencai? I have never heard of him in The Exorcists Alliance! Sigh... since 15 years ago, the Tantai Family no longer came out and the entire world is slowly turning into a mess..."

15 years ago, the Tantai Family was the most powerful among the exorcists in The Exorcists Alliance!

Everyone who came from the Tantai Family had exceptional abilities. However, the entire family disappeared without a trace all of a sudden which made many of them feel that their absence was regretful.

"However, before Master turned evil, he did mention that everyone in the Tantai Family is cursed... With this curse, it seems like they must have encountered some sort of danger..."

Even he was unwilling to be pessimistic about it.

After all, if the Tantai Family, the most powerful family of exorcists were to be wiped out, this would mean that all hope for mankind would be lost.

"Buddha... If you are truly existent, please let this world become normal!"

The monk sighed. Suddenly, he froze in his steps. "That is..."

"Pa!"

A man in a windbreaker knocked into him. At that moment, extreme fear filled the monk's heart.

"Amitufo..."

He started to continuously chant his mantra as his hands shivered in fear. "Such a feeling... It seems as though I had seen the person who had turned Master evil... It is hell! Everyone, including the grandmasters, had done their best. Did it have no effect at all?"

According to his Master's revelation just before he died, the monk knew that there was the existence of 'hell' in the realm.

Even his Master could be affected by the demon before turning evil to commit all the wrongdoings.

For that, the few grandmasters who were living in isolation were shocked. They came down the mountain in anger and wanted to seal up this 'hell'.

However, they never returned and the young monk always thought that the new grandmasters had combined forces and were annihilated together with the 'hell'. Never would he have thought that this being would still be in the realm, peering into the souls of humans without restraint!

"This issue... I cannot ignore it! Also... I will have to investigate where my grandmasters ended up!"

The young monk had come to a conclusion for himself and seemed determined.

He came from the Golden Mountain Monastery and was once part of the exorcists. They were only second to the Tantai Family at that time.

However, because of that so-called 'hell', most of the powerful beings of the monastery were wiped out and what was left were a few weak monks.

Until now, he was the only one who was powerful enough to start exploring the outside world!

This was a vengeance for the entire Monastery and he had to avenge all of them!

'Although I do not know where it is, I remember Master telling me that this being has the ability to see through one's weaknesses... Has it arrived here? I need to investigate further!'

The young monk silently chanted a mantra and an invisible palm print landed on the body of the man in the windbreaker.

'Indeed... Our spiritual auras have merely come into contact and I can already feel so much fear...'

He shook his head and did not follow that man. Instead, he stuck to his original plan and arrived at the Ma Paranormal Detective Corporation.

"Amitufo! I wish to see the owner!"

"Eh?"

Ma Wencai was in his pyjamas and a toothbrush stuck out of his mouth. He revealed a disgusted expression. "We do not give donations here. We do not provide vegetarian food as well!"

"Father! Is that how you treat guests?"

Ma Xiaoling rolled her eyes. "Master, please take a seat. Have you encountered any troubles?"

"No... I am here to thank all of you for what you've done at the Chen Residences!"

The monk placed his palms together and displayed a look of disappointment as he looked at Ma Wencai. As he examined Ma Xiaoling, he nodded his head. "A comrade indeed!"

"Comrade? Eh? Are you talking about me?"

Ma Xiaoling pointed to herself.

"Since you have the Yin Yang Eye, you are therefore a comrade. Are you not the one who resolved the issue at the Chen Residences?"

The monk sounded a little confused.

"It's me... and it's also not me! That is resolved by the colleagues here at the corporation, but it's not just me!"

Ma Xiaoling revealed a look of embarrassment. "I'll help you call for him. Although Yuan has always been lazy and is mostly unwilling to meet strangers, he has become diligent recently. Oh, Master, what do I address you by?"

"Amitufo..... My Buddhist name is Jiese[1]!"

"Pfft!"

Before Ma Xiaoling could react, Ma Wencai spat the water from his mouth before laughing. "Jie... Jiese? Wahahaha... Why would you have such a name, little monk?"

"Amitufo. Everything is fleeting, so why would a name matter?"

Master Jiese spoke in a serious tone. However, his slightly flushed face showed that he still knew what his name meant.

"Just admit it... you're a lustful monk!"

...

"Jiese?"

In the backyard, Fang Yuan overheard their conversation and felt interested. "Alright! Just by this name alone, I feel that it's worth to meet this monk!"

He arrived at the living room and met Master Jiese.

Master Jiese was very young. However, his muscles were bulging which showed that he was well-versed in his martial arts. Furthermore, there was a Buddhist vibe lingering around him, which was the rare sign that this person had a true cultivation in Buddhism.

"I am Fang Yuan. Master Jiese, are you here regarding the issue at the Chen Residences?"

"That's right... My Master's mistake resulted in a huge problem. As his disciple, I can only try my best to make up for it..."

Jiese the Monk started to explain what had happened years ago and started to look at Fang Yuan in a different light.

Ever since he had come down from the mountains, he had never come across a person which he was unable to see through.

[1]: Jiese means 'To abstain from lust'

Chapter 516: Pawnshop

"The Exorcists Alliance?"

After probing, Fang Yuan received shocking information from Jiese the Monk. "There is such an organisation in the world?!"

"Of course!"

Jiese the Monk smiled but was utterly stunned.

How could such a powerful exorcist not know the existence of The Exorcists Alliance? He was like a barbarian living in the woods!

"What an organisation..."

Upon hearing their conversation, Ma Xiaoling's mouth was agape.

"The Exorcists Alliance is an international organisation with many members from different countries. For instance, the Curse Magicians and Vermin Lords from Southeast Asia, as well as the Black Magicians and Pastors from the West... Everyone will exchange information with each other and help each other out... After all, against these threats, we humans are just too weak! Amitufo..."

Jiese the Monk revealed a look of desolation and resembled a respectable monk in that instant.

"If that is so... Master Jiese, you only know the existence of the Chen Residences after reading the scrolls left behind by your master, Master Yunhai..."

Fang Yuan was speechless. "You must be really kind! It has already been so many years since that incident!"

"That's right!"

This was a piece of memory etched into Ma Xiaoling's mind. "If not for Brother Fang Yuan who saved us, my father and I would've died in there."

"Amitufo... I'm really sorry to hear this!"

Jiese the Monk placed his palms together in front of his chest. "I did not receive my Master's belongings after his death. That piece of record was only passed to me by the elders after I had left the mountains after my training."

"It seems like the elders are even afraid of you as well and had already lost all hope of bringing the Monastery back together..."

Fang Yuan started to feel interested. "Monk, what are your plans after this?"

"Since the issue at the Chen Residences has been settled, I will prepare to avenge my Master... The 'Hell' which had tempted my Master to the dark side is still living in the world. I had only just come across one of its traders."

Jiese the Monk spoke the truth.

"Hell? I'm interested in this!"

Fang Yuan raised his cup of coffee. "Can you tell me more about it in detail?"

"I only heard about this from my elders as well as from the records. I do not know much about it. The only thing I know is that this 'Hell' is a building in the alternate dimension. Therefore, it is able to appear in any part of the world and influence humans to do its bidding!"

"That place seems like a breeding ground for all sorts of curses and ghosts. In the Recalling Spirit Ritual at the Chen Residences, I suspect that 'it' had influenced Master Yunhai to do its bidding. After all, the

Golden Mountain Monastery is only known for exorcism and peace-seeking rituals, not the Recalling Spirit Ritual."

"Oh? Who would've guessed that this would be the truth?"

Fang Yuan nodded his head. With a large affected area and a building in an alternate dimension, together with the ability to create curses, the source of this ghost might just be one at the 'Strange' Level!

'Is my fate changing?'

Fang Yuan was elated but he remained composed on the outside. "If there is really such a place, it will be the nightmare for mankind. I've decided to help Master in dealing with this Hell!"

"Amitufo! You..."

Jiese the Monk was stunned beyond words. This was the first time someone had volunteered themselves after hearing about the terrors of the Hell.

"There's nothing more to say. It's my mission to protect the peace in this world!"

Fang Yuan spoke with justice as Ma Xiaoling and Ma Wencai rolled their eyes.

"Regardless, it is great that you are willing to help me!"

Although he did not know why Fang Yuan would take the initiative to help him, it was still a good thing for him to gain such a powerful ally. Jiese the Monk quickly thanked Fang Yuan.

"Oh and one thing... how does the building look like?"

"Rumour has it that... it should be a pawnshop!"

...

"Huff! Huff!"

At the same time, in a small motel.

Lu Bingqi was on all fours as he breathed heavily like a dog. It was as though he was being saved from drowning. "Finally... it has ended! This is the time, activate, pawnshop!"

He took out something which resembled a black name card, bit on his own thumb and smeared the blood on it.

In that instant, the dirty and stuffy room suddenly began to transform.

A dark alternate dimension had transcended!

"Whoooo! Whoooo!"

There was a dark fog all around and a full moon was high in the night sky. A modern-looking pawnshop appeared before Lu Bingqi and the walls of the pawnshop were covered in green ghostly flames.

"Paranormal Pawnshop!"

Lu Bingqi clenched his teeth. He pushed the door open and walked down a familiar path into a room.

In the room, there was only a chair. As he sat on the chair, a bright flash sparkled before him, forming a row of twisted-looking words:

"Escaping from the life-threatening evil ghost alive, completed! You can initiate 1 trade!"

"We're back here!"

Lu Bingqi rubbed his right eye and recalled the first time he had come to the Paranormal Pawnshop.

He had the dream to explore the world when he was younger and had left his hometown to make a name for himself. Although reality gave him a tight slap, he was still able to survive in a foreign country.

However, a sudden car crash destroyed all that he had.

The impact of the car crash was still fresh in his mind. As soon as he woke up, he was already here! This was the true... Hell!

'You are already dead! Now, you have two choices. Firstly, you can leave here to complete your death! Secondly, you can sign a contract and pawn your dead soul in exchange for a revival!'

This was the first offer he had come across in the pawnshop.

Since he knew that he was already dead, nothing could be worse. Of course, Lu Bingqi would choose the second option.

When he woke up again, he realised that he had returned to the real world, where the car crash was. He was uninjured, but no one was shocked at the accident. To put things into context, he had turned into a pile of bloodied mess just moments ago!

Therefore, he now entirely trusted the powers of the pawnshop and knew that his dead soul would forever belong to the pawnshop!

However, this first trade was only the beginning of a series of nightmares!

"I have passed this year's tribulation... Because I do not belong here, I will have to face the life-threatening evil ghost every year on my death day. I need to continuously trade with the pawnshop in order to stay alive!"

The scar on Lu Bingqi's face started to hurt.

Of course, the pawnshop was not a charitable organisation. In exchange for an eye which was able to see paranormal activity, Lu Bingqi had to give up his entire right eye and had to face a ghost for 3 straight days in a graveyard! It was an experience which almost drove him crazy!

"Sometimes, the pawnshop will request for our lifespan, and other times they will request us to complete a certain task. Most of the time, these tasks will involve endangering us under curses... It is almost like this pawnshop owner is a psychopath who will take joy from looking at us escape death. Finally, he will harvest our injured souls!"

Similar to a conventional pawnshop, the Paranormal Pawnshop was like a vampire.

They had already put in place traps during the first trade to revive. Those who were fortunate enough to revive would have to continue to trade in order to stay alive.

If one were to be fortunate enough to survive the annual encounter with the life-threatening ghost, they would gain an opportunity to trade in the pawnshop and no one would give up such an opportunity.

"To newcomers, the first encounter with the life-threatening ghost will be the most dangerous. However, once they survive it, they will be able to engage in a trade to strengthen themselves. Of course, since this will be their first trade since their revival, the pawnshop will give them a discount. They will not require them to complete any task but instead will just draw from their lifespan, joy or flesh to strengthen them. It is as though they want us to become stronger so they can further toy with us!"

Lu Bingqi sighed as he felt extreme fatigue all over his body.

However, through some 'Experienced Seniors', he had gained some insider information.

If he was able to pay the price, he would be able to redeem his own soul back!

If not for this, most customers of the pawnshop would have given up hope.

"It is rumoured that if I engage in more than 7 trades, the option to redeem my soul will appear!"

Lu Bingqi didn't know if this rumour was true. However, he could only choose to believe it.

"The pawnshop is not a charitable organisation. In theory, you will be able to request anything from it as long as you are able to pay for it!"

Lu Bingqi held his chest. "Pawnshop, How much will I have to pay if I want to avenge my nephew, Lu Xia?"

"Rumble!"

The green glow faded before him, but there were no new words.

Lu Bingqi felt a sense of familiarity. "It is unable to complete. Could it be because I don't have enough to trade? Could Xia have really died in an accident? No... I've checked before. There are 2 deaths and 1 missing person during that period. How can such a strange death be normal? If not for the fact that Wu Lu had lost her memory, I could've known even more about Xia's death... As of now, it seems like it is related to a certain curse from a ghost?"

Lu Bingqi had heard many experiences of his experienced seniors taking up such tasks.

They either had to unseal a certain ghost or spread a certain curse. Regardless, all the tasks were evil and dangerous.

"Pawnshop!"

Thinking about this, Lu Bingqi clenched his teeth. "I shall change my request. I want to know the truth behind my nephew, Lu Xia's death!"

"Rumble!"

Flames erupted before him and a streak of green words appeared:

Pawnshop contract: To gain the truth behind Lu Xia's death!

Price: Unseal the ghost in the Chen Residences within 7 days from now. Stay in the residences for a night after unsealing the ghost!

...

"It is not a request for my lifespan or flesh, but instead, a task to unseal a ghost!"

Lu Bingqi sighed.

As soon as the words glowed before him, it would that the contract would take effect immediately and he had to accomplish it! As long as he completed the task, he would be able to know the truth behind Lu Xia's death!

On this, the pawnshop was still worthy enough to be trusted.

"However, this is a huge price to pay for just knowing the truth behind his death..."

Lu Bingqi remained solemn. In the eyes of the pawnshop, an effective contract would mean that the things being traded were of equal value.

"Is there something remarkable in the truth?"

He mumbled to himself. This was the only explanation as to why the price to pay would be so high!

Chapter 517: Overcome

"This is the trader from the Pawnshop?"

While Lu Bingqi returned to reality and began to make preparations for the unleashing of the spirits, he had no idea that Fang Yuan and Jiese the Monk were watching him.

"Amitufo, that's right! I thought it was strange when I left the bus station, then when I met this person again, I was very sure that he was a trader from the Pawnshop!"

Jiese the Monk clasped his hands together and shouted out the name of Buddha.

Fang Yuan found that this little monk not only had a solid grounding in cultivation, but was also intelligent.

This person had placed a tracking imprint on Fang Yuan upon meeting him for merely the first time. This was a clear indication of his devious nature.

Nevertheless, in the current day and age, it was necessary to employ underhanded tactics in order to deal with more unscrupulous enemies.

"Something is wrong!"

Fang Yuan and Jiese covered up their tracks and began to travel back to where they came from. In the end, they still managed to make it to the Chen Residences.

"Indeed... the Spirit Recalling Ritual that my Master had imparted to Chen Xinbo is another one of the Pawnshop's creations..."

Lu Bingqi had already closed a few deals with the Pawnshop and was uncommonly skilled. He had dispatched the two guards easily and strode into the Chen Residences unopposed.

Jiese the Monk let out a sigh as he witnessed the scene.

"This person has ill intentions. If he releases the evil spirits, the consequences will be dire. He must be stopped..."

"Oh, are you talking about the ghost in the Chen Residences?"

Fang Yuan grinned.

"That's nothing much to worry about. Let's wait and see for now."

Even if a paranormal entity like that appeared, Fang Yuan would destroy it all the same.

.....

"Damn it!"

Lu Bingqi wandered deep into the building and came to the elder daughter's room. His right eye suddenly became bloodshot and his pupils dilated. He cast a sweeping glance and cursed loudly.

"What the heck...why are there so many talismans placed here? Which bloody monk did this..."

Although these talismans were not very effective against spirits, they could at least discourage evil spirits from convening in the area.

Without hesitation, Lu Bingqi took out his little knife, black dog's blood and other tools, and began to vandalise the walls so as to drown out the spiritual light emanating from it.

It was dusk and the stars were out by the time he was finished.

Lu Bingqi sucked in a deep breath and took out a piece of green jade. He then pressed it to a hollow on the floor.

This was the original location in which Chen Xinbo devised the Spirit Recalling Ritual, and he had reactivated it!

Since he was to release the spirit through the ritual, he had obviously brought along the necessary tools.

The piece of jade was translucent and he could see veiny traces of red in it.

In truth, the red lines were the products of hatred and blood, and when the jade was added into the array, it would become the key to releasing the evil spirit.

"I cannot expect a malevolent spirit such as this to thank me upon its release. It is more likely to kill me!"

Lu Bingqi gulped.

But the agreement was already in place and he could not back out now.

The Pawnshop had decreed that he stay here for a night after releasing the evil spirit. He had to do it!

Or else, they would tag another evil spirit to him for the rest of his life, and he would suffer a terrible fate.

To break a contract with the Pawnshop was to suffer a fate worse than death!

This piece of advice was given to him by countless people, and he would never forget it.

"Amitufo, I cannot bear to witness this any longer!"

Jiese the Monk pounced on Lu Bingqi in a flash and snatched over the piece of blood jade.

"I cannot let this spirit be revived and run amok as a menace!"

"Where did you come from, monk? Don't interfere in my business!"

Lu Bingqi spoke coldly with every intention to kill.

He was prepared to do anything just so he could survive. Also, he had done enough deals with the Pawnshop to acquire a few special abilities.

For example, his right eye was able to detect paranormal activity and entities.

"You have desecrated this place, a site set up by my Master...how can you say that this isn't my business?"

Jiese the Monk was simmering with anger and broke out into an attacking stance.

He was not afraid, for he knew that the Buddha would look out for him and aid him in dealing with demonic creatures!

"Hmph, seems like you are tired of living!"

Lu Bingqi was aware of this monk's background and knew that there was no way to resolve this peacefully. He glared at Jiese the Monk.

"Don't blame me if you die!"

Out of his right eye, he could see the aura surrounding Jiese the Monk becoming thicker.

At the same time, Jiese the Monk had a premonition of the other party extinguishing his aura, which would lead to dire consequences. He immediately flew forward and threw out his right palm.

"Veda Palm!"

Pak!

Lu Bingqi sent his fist flying and retreated. It was clear that he was skilled in the martial arts and was quite the formidable fighter.

In a blink, the two had traded multiple blows. It was a stalemate.

"Wow...what a boring fight!"

Fang Yuan yawned as he spectated the fight lazily.

Finally, Jiese the Monk managed to disarm Lu Bingqi of his knife and palmed his right eye. A golden swastika appeared and sealed off the abilities of the right eye temporarily. He had been overcome.

"You are finally done..."

Fang Yuan stepped forward and examined the defeated Lu Bingqi.

"You are a trader from the Pawnshop, is that right? You have been sent to release the spirit?"

"You know about the Pawnshop?"

Lu Bingqi was stunned but he shut his mouth and refused to say another word.

"Would he die if he revealed information? Or does he simply not want to talk to us?"

Fang Yuan turned around to face Jiese the Monk.

"What should we do?"

"Amitufo! When such a situation arises, we monks would beat the information out of them!"

"Hmm, great suggestion! But I have a better idea!"

Fang Yuan stood in front of Lu Bingqi with an indifferent look on his face, which gave Lu Bingqi the chills.

"What are you going to do?"

"Nothing?"

Burn marks suddenly appeared on Fang Yuan's face and his eyes turned blood red.

"Wha..."

Jiese the Monk had a more agitated response.

Just as Fang Yuan released his inner demon, Jiese the Monk felt all his hairs stand on end and he retreated into the distance.

"Are you... even human?"

"Of course I am! Long story, but I can do what spirits do..."

Fang Yuan injected red rays of light into Lu Bingqi's pupils and left him in a sluggish state while Fang Yuan riffled through his memories.

"You are really human?"

Jiese the Monk found it hard to believe. To him, Fang Yuan had become a terrifying spirit. He was spooked beyond measure.

"He has the abilities of spirits...did he seal a spirit on his own body?"

He was truly the successor to the Golden Mountain Monastery and had quickly come to an accurate conclusion.

"Buddha used to say, 'If not me, then who?'. This young master has made a great sacrifice and is an inspiration to our generation!"

Admiration aside, Jiese the Monk would never do that.

He knew that if he sealed a spirit on his own body, he would most definitely die! The best case scenario would be a possession by an evil spirit, and he would live out his days like his master, in a demonic trance!"

"Lu Xia's uncle? Interesting!"

Evil spirits could force mortal memories to reveal themselves. Fang Yuan learnt everything about Lu Bingqi after a short time.

"You were forced to release the spirit, and intended to take revenge for your nephew as well? Hmm?"

Although Lu Bingqi's memories were laid bare for Fang Yuan to see, Fang Yuan also realised that there were many gaps.

"The memories of the Pawnshop were blanked out! No...they were inaccessible to him! Indeed, there were mantras that were capable of countering the abilities of evil spirits..."

Fang Yuan ceased using his divine technique and Lu Bingqi slowly regained his senses. He immediately felt a sharp iciness in his heart.

"What...what did you do to me?"

"Don't be upset. We're all professional exorcists and are here to help you out."

Fang Yuan smiled and went on.

"Do you not want to escape the control of the Pawnshop?"

"You all want to deal with the Pawnshop?"

Lu Bingqi shook his head.

"That's impossible! No one can destroy the Pawnshop. You have no idea about our desolation... even the spirits of the lowest level cannot be defeated. This is the truth!"

"Seems like you're well aware of your situation. However, I am an exception... Just a heads up. The evil spirit that killed your nephew Lu Xia was sealed up by yours truly."

"What?"

Lu Bingqi was more distressed than Fang Yuan expected. He went slack-jawed.

"What did you say?"

Fang Yuan continue blandly.

"I know you are confused, but I can tell you the whole story!"

When Fang Yuan was done explaining everything, Lu Bingqi was devastated.

"So... this is the truth? My god, I would have found out about the truth if I only waited a little longer. But I had to make a deal with the Pawnshop... Haha... I must be the dumbest person who has ever lived!"

"What kind of deal? Explain!"

Fang Yuan's interest was piqued.

"Your explanation ties in with my investigations. I believe you. Since you have avenged my nephew, let me give you a caveat. The Pawnshop is worldly and has vast resources. You cannot hope to challenge them. Forget your plan and move on with your life!"

"Don't worry, I don't do things that I don't have confidence in!"

Fang Yuan kept smiling.

"Anyway, tell me everything you know about the Pawnshop, if there is nothing stopping you from doing so..."

"Alright, if you insist!"

Lu Bingqi began to share all that he knew, with Fang Yuan and Jiese the Monk listening intently beside him. As Lu Bingqi spoke on, their faces, Jiese's especially, slowly morphed into stunned ones.

"This is ridiculous. Such a thing actually exists in this world? So you're saying that my Master was entranced by it?"

Chapter 518: An Idea

"This means that if you do not unseal the ghost and fulfil the criteria of staying with it for one night, you will still die. This is the contents of the contract! It will not change because you have received the truth in advance!"

After hearing Lu Bingqi's description, Fang Yuan sighed. "Interesting... A pawnshop which secretly harvests the souls of humans and spreads curses around?"

"None of this is interesting, okay?"

Lu Bingqi rolled his eyes. "As soon as the pawnshop knows that I cannot pay the price, they will immediately confiscate the soul which I have pawned to them!"

"Alright, alright, it's just a ghost, right?"

Fang Yuan casually threw the piece of Enmity Blood Jade into the array.

"What are you doing?"

Jiese the monk was shocked. With that, the three of them witnessed the blood streaks flowing out from the jade, staining the entire floor of the room a blood-red hue.

"Bloop! Bloop!"

The blood was being absorbed by the floor as though the entire room had come to live.

Fang Yuan had a much easier time in initiating the array as compared to Lu Bingqi. In an instant, a sinister vibe filled the atmosphere.

"Oh, Buddha... what have you done?"

Jiese the Monk looked at Fang Yuan and was devastated.

"Since he will die if he cannot complete the task, let's try completing the task for him!"

Fang Yuan shrugged his shoulders. To him, it would cost him almost no effort to seal the ghost back.

"Even if you want to unseal the ghost, you have to let me be prepared!"

Even Lu Bingqi had given up all hope. At least unseal my eye first... That ghost will surely target me first!"

"There's no need for that!"

Fang Yuan raised his fist and smashed into mid-air.

"Bang!"

A female ghost in white appeared. As soon as she saw Fang Yuan, she shrieked, turned around and fled... fled...

"Amitufo, oh Lord Buddha... what have you done to the female ghost?"

Jiese the Monk mumbled to himself.

"Whoosh!"

Beside him, Fang Yuan had already turned into an illusionary shadow. In an instant, he appeared above the female ghost. Like a sun, he radiated heat and light and his shocking aura stunned the ghost. Quickly, he transformed into the shape of a giant eagle. "Heavenly Eagle Claw!"

"Bang!"

As the claw struck down, the female ghost disintegrated into powder.

The sinister vibes which once filled the room quickly dissipated and was long gone.

"Mmm? What did you guys say? I didn't hear it too clearly..."

Fang Yuan turned around and looked at the both of them.

"No... Nothing much!"

Lu Bingqi and Jiese the Monk were both utterly confused. Was that the terrorizing ghost which had toyed with them and forced them into desolation?

Why did she seem like a piece of flimsy paper in front of Fang Yuan?

"Amituofu... This is a miracle! This is the first time I have seen the power of an Arhat^[1] in a human!"

Jiese paid his greetings to Fang Yuan and treated him like a living Arhat.

"You are able to use martial arts to destroy a ghost? I'm afraid that even the number one martial artist in the world is unable to do that, right?"

Lu Bingqi's eyes were wide open. "I now trust in your abilities. I hope that... you are able to seal that Hell up!"

"This of course... We still have an entire night. You can repeat everything that you have said just now, but don't miss out on a single detail!"

Fang Yuan forcefully stomped on the ground, creating a hole in the floorboards. A white shadow seemed to have disintegrated once more.

"If you are smart, leave us alone. Otherwise, I will destroy you!"

The female ghost in white was destroyed by Fang Yuan too many times and could not restore its form in such a short time. Therefore, it was temporarily forced into hibernation.

Indeed, she had obediently left them alone and no longer pestered them.

"Take a look... Isn't she reasonable?"

Fang Yuan dusted his hands, crossed his legs and sat down while looking at the both of them.

'Compared to that female ghost, you're more like the ghost!'

Jiese the Monk and Lu Bingqi were speechless. Slowly, they accepted reality and their speechlessness turned into relieve and happiness.

"Who would've thought that we will have such a powerful person among us humans that is able to counter ghosts with pure martial arts! This is unbelievable!"

Jiese the Monk mumbled under his breath.

"This is because of my unique physical stats!"

Fang Yuan shook his head. For a normal person, having 2 to 3 times the stats of the average human would already be impressive enough.

Such physical properties were still too weak against ghosts and curses. Therefore, most humans had already lost all hope in resisting.

However, it was different for Fang Yuan. Although Fang Yuan's stats were disrupted on his arrival, he was still able to break through the limit of the average human in this realm. Together with his Spirit Sealing Body complementing his combat power, Fang Yuan's physical condition was 10 times the normal

human and his strength was overbearing. Even if he were to be severely injured, he would not die and instead, he would be able to recover in no time.

Such survivability and combat power would make Fang Yuan like a monster! He could be the only one powerful enough to deal with ghosts!

'Even if anyone were to become as strong as me through their martial arts, they will at most be able to destroy Spirit Level ghosts. Before a Murderous Level ghost, they will barely ensure their own survival. Against a Strange Level ghost, they have almost no chance of winning! No! They have zero chances of winning! They will be poor souls being toyed by these Strange Level ghosts... however, if they were to have the exorcism techniques and concoctions from the Tantai Family, they might just have a slim chance of survival!'

Fang Yuan knew his own limits and did not dare to be reckless before a curse which was at the Strange Level.

The only thing he could rely on now was his Spirit Sealing Body.

He was not confident of entirely sealing up the Paranormal Pawnshop.

After all, he had to find the source of the curse before he could entirely seal up the Strange Level curse. It would be useless to seal its split entities or other low-levelled curses.

"Since the physical form of the Paranormal Pawnshop is in the alternate dimension, can you bring us there?"

It was nightfall and a bonfire was lit in the middle of the Chen Residences. A fragrant and plump chicken was roasted over the fire. Jiese the Monk was salivating as he smeared seasoning all over the chicken. He was incredibly skilled at it and it seemed like he had secretly drunk alcohol and ate meat before.

'Jiese, oh Jiese. It seems like other than lust, this monk is after everything else...'

Seeing this, Fang Yuan rolled his eyes. Although he knew that this was not what Jiese's name meant, he could not help but think that way.

Slowly, he shifted his attention to Lu Bingqi.

"This... Even we the 'traders' can only enter the pawnshop after smearing our blood on a name card after surviving our encounter with the life-threatening evil ghost. Only then will we be able to engage in a trade... Normally, we will not be able to enter the place."

Lu Bingqi scratched his head. "Right... To think about it, I had already received the name card of this pawnshop before the accident happened. I had casually placed it in my wallet. Could this be a reason why I was chosen to enter the pawnshop?!"

He smiled sheepishly.

Obviously, if he knew the truth behind the pawnshop and how scary the pawnshop really was, he might not have made the same decision as he did previously.

"Namecard? Let me take a look!"

Fang Yuan glanced down and took a black name card from Lu Bingqi.

There was a dim glow to the name card and the words were in gold. It had a luxurious appearance.

"What's written on it?"

Jiese the Monk took the name card from Fang Yuan and was filled with curiosity. However, he realised that could not read the words as well.

"Paranormal Pawnshop!"

Lu Bingqi spoke in a soft voice. "I've looked for normal humans and even exorcists to try reading the name card only to realise that only us traders are able to see the words on the card clearly!"

"Hmm, it seems like there is a layer of protection being cast on it..."

A gold hue flashed in Fang Yuan's eyes as he suddenly gazed towards Lu Bingqi. "HMMMMMM... We cannot remain passive. We need to actively seek them out."

"Actively seek them out? What do you mean?"

Lu Bingqi suddenly felt a chill down his spine as he could sense hostility from Fang Yuan's glare.

"Although we have unsealed the ghost, you still need to spend the night in the Chen Residences, right?"

Fang Yuan smiled and looked at Lu Bingqi. "As soon as you leave the premises of the Chen Residences, the pawnshop will interfere and confiscate what you have mortgaged, right?"

"Yes... that's right..."

Lu Bingqi sounded hoarse.

He had mortgaged his soul! If the pawnshop were to confiscate it, he would die on the spot.

"Are you still intending to struggle in this Hell all for that slim chance of hope?"

Fang Yuan's voice was tempting. "The rumour that you might redeem your soul might just be a hoax... You can test it out! In the real world, I have confidence that I am still able to retain your soul even if the pawnshop were to attempt to confiscate it."

"Keke... forget it!"

Lu Bingqi forced a smile.

Compared to Fang Yuan who he knew nothing about, he would prefer to trust the pawnshop more. At least, the pawnshop would honour their promises.

"Jiese, what do you think?"

Fang Yuan looked towards the monk by his side.

"Amitufo..."

Jiese had already gobbled down an entire drumstick and was wiping the oil from his mouth before showing a straight face. "Since Mister Lu is already on the path of evil, if he continues to live, he will

continue to engage in trades with the pawnshop and in the process release ghosts and curses to cause harm for the world. Considering the outcome, I cannot let all of these happen!"

"F*ck! I knew that you are not a good monk from the beginning!"

Lu Bingqi spoke with anger.

His life was on the line. Of course he wanted to retaliate! However, after seeing Fang Yuan's abilities from the previous fight, he knew that he did not have much of a choice.

With that, he rolled his eyes in disgust. "What do you guys intend to do? Tell me!"

"It's simple. Break the deal, make the pawnshop interfere and from there, we shall test its abilities..."

Fang Yuan looked around. "This place is very suitable... Of course, I will have to make some preparations. Monk, if you have any secret moves, use them now. I'm afraid you won't have a chance later."

"Amitufo, that is what I am thinking as well!"

After a full meal, Jiese the Monk restored his calm and revered look. "It will be a good deed if we are able to settle this 'Hell' once and for all!"

[1]: Theravada Buddhism defines Arhat as one who has gained insight into the true nature of existence and has achieved nirvana.

Chapter 519: Punishment

Lu Bingqi found himself in an awkward position.

From the beginning, he thought that Fang Yuan was his saviour.

Now, he was clear that Fang Yuan was only treating him as a test subject!

The most frustrating thing was that he was too weak to resist anything because he couldn't even win a fight with Jiese the Monk!

"Unsealing the ghost is only half of the task. The other half will require you to spend a night in the Chen Residences..."

Fang Yuan dragged the regretful Lu Bingqi towards the entrance of the residences. "Monk, what's up?"

"Amitufo... I've already tried my best. However, we cannot be sure if the Buddha Array has any effect on the pawnshop..."

Jiese the Monk spoke truthfully.

"Wait up monk, isn't there a Buddhist saying that saving a single life is more meritorious as compared to becoming Buddha? How can you do this to me?"

Lu Bingqi screamed in desperation.

"If killing one will allow me to save 10,000 others, even if I go to hell, I will do it!"

Jiese the Monk retorted firmly.

"You d*mned monk!"

Lu Bingqi was already restless and could not resist as Fang Yuan dragged him out of the residences.

"It's over... I'm dead!"

He mumbled to himself and shivered in fear as he recalled the outcomes of those who had gone back on their agreements.

The real torture was not death itself, but the inability to die peacefully!

In the Paranormal Pawnshop, there was a row of brains decorating the corridors which would send chills down the spine of whoever looked at it. Those were... the traders who had gone back on their words!

Lu Bingqi knew that these traders were still alive and had been forced to stay alive for more than a hundred years.

Their consciousnesses were locked up in a small dark room. Anything with wisdom would go crazy after a prolonged period in the room.

This was intentional. The pawnshop had kept these brains alive to deter the rest from trying anything funny!

Because of this, there were extremely few traders who dared to go against the pawnshop.

But now, Lu Bingqi was being forced to do so.

In the eyes of the pawnshop, there would be the same consequences regardless if one was forced or not!

"It... It has come!"

As soon as Lu Bingqi was being pulled out of the Chen Residences, he could feel a bad omen approaching as he wailed in despair.

"Don't worry! Of course, I know it's coming!"

Fang Yuan smiled and walked towards Lu Bingqi. Suddenly, with outstretched fingers, he poked them into Lu Bingqi's eye sockets.

"Ahhh!"

Lu Bingqi's right eye was being dug out and blood dripped everywhere as he screamed in pain.

"I admire the lot of you who are daring enough to trade with the pawnshop in exchange for these strengthened abilities which are being tampered with... Although this Ghost Eye will allow you to see ghosts and give you strengthened abilities, if activated, they will explode inside you!"

Fang Yuan scoffed as he examined the Ghost Eye in his hands.

At that moment, the reflection of a soul appeared as it flew about in the eyeball.

"Hmph, boring!"

With a forceful clench of his fist, the entire eyeball exploded and even the powerful ghost within it disappeared in an instant.

"Ah..."

The one-eyed Lu Bingqi was rolling on the ground and wailed in pain. Suddenly, he held his head with both his hands. "It's useless... When I signed the contract, they had already imprinted the mortgage seal on my soul! Now, it will be able to harvest my soul according to the contract..."

"Amitufo, you don't have to worry about this!"

Jiese the Monk remained serious. "I have cast the Buddha Array so that your soul will be contained within you... Furthermore, even if your soul were to be pulled out of you, you don't have to worry. Master Fang will pull your soul back."

Lu Bingqi could slowly feel his soul being tugged out of his body. However, it only lasted for a few moments before another force pulled his soul back. The two forces pushed and pulled, leaving Lu Bingqi crawling on the ground like an exhausted dog.

"Of course, our actions are likely to infuriate the pawnshop, making it retaliate."

Fang Yuan nodded his head and examined the surroundings.

A thick layer of black fog appeared and shrouded them.

Amidst the green ghostly fire around, silhouettes appeared. These silhouettes turned into expressionless ghosts which began to flood towards them.

"Since the curse and restrictions within Lu Bingqi are being lifted, they are now attacking from the outside?"

Fang Yuan stood behind Lu Bingqi. His eyes turned golden as he swept his surroundings.

Evidently, the pawnshop's only target was Lu Bingqi.

If it were to recklessly pull Lu Bingqi out, it would have to enter this alternate dimension, cutting itself off from its own source of curse energy!

"Buddhas in 4 Directions, strengthen the fire! Om Mani Padme Hum! Om Mani Padme Hum!"

Seeing the approaching swarm of ghosts, Jiese the Monk quickly strengthened the array. A golden pagoda slowly appeared and golden flames were burning on the sides of the pagoda.

The swarm of ghosts arrived outside and remained emotionless but they remained outside and could not advance further.

"Ha... Never would I have thought that the first time I will execute this array after leaving the mountains will be against so many wronged souls..."

Jiese the Monk took in a cold breath. "Master Fang, don't worry. I am still able to hold up!"

"Is that so?"

Fang Yuan pointed in a certain direction.

A humongous female ghost appeared. Her size was almost as huge as the entire Chen Residences. With an opened mouth, she attempted to swallow the entire golden array. From her wide-opened mouth, countless ghosts floated out.

"Rumble!"

In an instant, the entire Buddha Array started to dim and cracks appeared on the ground beneath them.

Jiese the Monk shook a little and spat out a mouthful of blood.

"Sigh. At the end of everything, you are still too weak and you need me to help you!"

Fang Yuan sighed before releasing the first ghost which he had sealed.

"Whoooo!"

A chilly breeze blew across them.

The swarm of ghosts seemed to be shocked at something as they retreated.

Even though this sealed ghost had dropped in its Level, it had still originated from a Strange Level curse! These common Spirit Level ghosts would surely be no match for it and therefore, they started to retreat.

The humongous female ghost was relentless in her attacks. Sticking out her tongue, she started licking the array.

Upon a closer look, they realised that this 'tongue' was formed from countless human heads with bleeding eyes.

"It's another 'Murderous' Level ghost!"

Burnt marks started to appear on Fang Yuan's face. He had activated the ability of the second Murderous ghost and flames erupted everywhere before overwhelming the female ghost.

"This..."

Jiese the Monk looked at Fang Yuan in shock. "How many ghostly souls have you sealed in your body?"

"Not many, just two!"

Fang Yuan remained calm and composed. "Although I had pushed that ghost into the alternate dimension, I cannot hold her there for long. She will be back soon."

There was no way Jiese the Monk could deal with the Murderous Grade ghost. Fang Yuan had to deal with her himself!

"Look after Lu Bingqi!"

The scorched marks on Fang Yuan became increasingly obvious as it slowly covered over his original icy appearance.

At this moment, a huge ghostly hand appeared in mid-air and crushed downwards.

"Rumble!"

The entire Buddha Array shattered in that instant and disintegrated into sparks.

"Great!"

Jiese the Monk took out a lace of Buddhist beads and wrapped them around Lu Bingqi before pulling him to safety.

"Do you think you are powerful just because you are big in size?"

Fang Yuan laughed as he shot towards the humongous female ghost.

"Bang!"

Like a bullet, Fang Yuan flew through the face of the female ghost. There were burn marks where he had flown through and her face started to disintegrate.

"You are a mere Murderous Level ghost and there is no value in sealing you."

Fang Yuan stood on the forehead of the female ghost and looked at her expressionless eyes.

"I hate your expression!"

As he mumbled under his breath, he struck his claw out and broke a test-tube of concoction before landing the claw in her eyes.

With Fang Yuan's abilities and the exorcism skills of the Tantai Family, he was able to inflict severe damage to the Murderous Level ghost.

In that instant, the female ghost's body started to warp and the faces on her tongue started to shriek in unison.

"Heavenly Eagle... Slice!"

Focusing his energy, Fang Yuan gripped his right hand tightly and a 10-metre-long energy sword appeared in his hands. With it, he sliced towards the female ghost.

"Shiingg!"

The sword was quick.

The female ghost was stunned. Slowly, her forehead started to break apart and her body became increasingly dim.

"Amituofo... With the sword, you will be able to exterminate all sorts of ghosts!"

Jiese the Monk was captivated at this scene and momentarily forgot that he was running away from the ghosts.

"This is impossible!"

Even Lu Bingqi could not believe his eyes.

Even an experienced trader would not be able to survive if encountered with such a humongous female ghost!

But what about this person before him?

In a single slice, the most fearsome ghost which he had ever laid his eyes on disintegrated without a fight!

How was this possible?

These were the powerful ghosts which had forced him into desperation!

At this moment, there was a turn of events!

"Whoosh!"

There was a quick flash and Lu Bingqi disappeared into thin air.

"How is this possible?"

Jiesi the Monk leapt towards Lu Bingqi, but all he caught was the lace of Buddhist beads.

"Whoosh!"

The lace broke and the Buddhist beads rolled on the ground, the sound resembling a mocking laughter.

"Has Lu Bingqi been... pulled to the Paranormal Pawnshop?!"

Fang Yuan walked over and seemed to be deep in his thoughts as he witnessed everything.

"That's right... It's my fault that I've caused his death!"

Jiese the Monk had a look of defeat on his face.

In the surroundings, the swarm of ghosts and even the humongous female ghost were all gone.

They were all here for Lu Bingqi. Now that he had been successfully pulled into the pawnshop, they would naturally disappear as though all that had happened was just an illusion.

"Whatever!"

Fang Yuan had a sneaky look on his face. "... Who said that we've lost?"

...

"Bang!"

Lu Bingqi fell onto the ground embarrassedly.

The building of the Paranormal Pawnshop stood before him.

The row of brains seemed to be focusing on him, hinting at him the possibility of experiencing mental torture.

"No... I did not go against the agreement on purpose..."

Lu Bingqi was desperate and fearful. "Let me off! Let me off this time!"

Chapter 520: Killing Through the Pawnshop

"Ring! Ring!"

Silhouettes of all sorts of shapes appeared around Lu Bingqi but all of them were motionless.

He held his breath as he waited for the human form of the pawnshop to appear.

One minute had passed, two minutes had passed... The expected punishment never came. Instead, the space around him shook as though it was chasing him away,

"What's happening? Had the pawnshop given up on punishing me?"

Lu Bingqi was in shock.

"Have you realised it? It is easy for you to get me here, but it's going to be hard if you want to chase me away! Since I'm here now, it is not going to be easy to get rid of me!"

A loud voice was heard coming from Lu Bingqi.

"Are you... Mister Fang Yuan?!"

Lu Bingqi was at lost. He knew that if Fang Yuan were to help him, he could still survive this ordeal.

However, there was something even more shocking.

His right eye was previously dug out. In his eye socket, blood started to gush out and a black silhouette emerged from it. It was a ghost!

"Is this the Paranormal Pawnshop?"

The ghost was scanning the building as Fang Yuan's voice came out from it. "It is indeed hidden very well... Even my physical body is unable to detect this place!"

Fang Yuan was merely a split entity!

After sealing a ghost, he would be able to use its abilities.

The previous Murderous Level ghost which Fang Yuan had just sealed had the abilities to alter memories, create split entities of itself and pull others into an alternate dimension.

Before they had arrived at the Paranormal Pawnshop, Fang Yuan had secretly created a split entity of himself and entered Lu Bingqi's body while he dealt the humongous female ghost by himself, therefore, putting the bait out.

The Paranormal Pawnshop was indeed inflexible enough to have pulled Lu Bingqi straight into its own dimension to punish him.

"Ring! Ring!"

After realising that they were not able to chase Fang Yuan away, alarms started to shrill in the entire pawnshop. Instruments of torture flew in mid-air towards Fang Yuan.

These instruments of torture were all cast with powerful curses which would allow them to deal with both humans and ghosts.

A mere split entity at the Spirit Level could do little in the pawnshop against the powerful ghosts here. In an instant, Fang Yuan was forced to the corner.

However, Fang Yuan left the split entity in Lu Bingqi not just to see the pawnshop. More importantly, it was to locate it.

Although this was his last resort, he was still not desperate enough to go to such lengths.

"It's important to know that... the split entity of a Murderous Level ghost is only at the Spirit Level. However, this split entity is able to appear at will and always has the upper hand. This is because these split entities have a delicate connection to the actual body itself. It is even able to swap locations with the actual body in an instant!"

"Buzz!"

In the next moment, the original black ghost had disappeared and was replaced by Fang Yuan's actual self!

In the outside world, Jiese the Monk was utterly shocked at Fang Yuan turning into a ghost. However, Fang Yuan who was now in the pawnshop started to examine his surroundings in detail before nodding his head. "This place is indeed an alternate dimension! I can sense that... the source is here!"

This was the source of a Strange Level paranormal presence! It was significant!

In an instant, Fang Yuan turned into the most powerful form he could turn into. The abilities of two powerful ghosts stacked against each other and even his hands were partially ice and fire.

"Kacha!"

In the blink of an eye, the brutal instruments of torture were hit to the ground and turned into a pile of bent metal.

At the same time, Fang Yuan could feel a huge pressure growing on him.

It was the collective power of the paranormal presence here!

The Strange Level curse had an area-wide effect which would last for thousands of years. It would mean a desolate world if placed upon the outside realm!

How scary would it be for such a curse to explode to its full potential in this alternate dimension?

At least Fang Yuan knew that if he did not release the abilities of the ghosts in him, his normal human body would not be able to withstand the curse for even a moment. He would have died in an instant!

"The compressing void, the control of information, the vengeful curses... everything is collectively targeted at me now."

The purple and black streaks on Fang Yuan's body formed a unique pattern which started to expand all over his body.

It was never a safe thing to release ghosts in the first place!

If Fang Yuan previously only released 30% of the ghost's abilities, now would be roughly 50%! It was close to the limit!

If he really crossed the limit, there would only be two consequences.

He could either force both ghosts out entirely and hope that they would go head-on with the Paranormal Pawnshop, resulting in both parties getting destroyed each other leaving Fang Yuan alive to seal both of them back afterwards.

Another option would be to allow the ghosts to completely take over his body to transform himself into a true evil ghost! There would be no turning back!

Of course, considering Fang Yuan's physical conditions, the limit in which he could release the ghost was relatively high!

If he was a normal exorcist, he would already be close to his limit at 50%.

"My physical condition exceeds the limitation the realm imposes on humans. Together with my True Spirit and strong willpower, I am not afraid of being overwhelmed by the ghosts. Therefore, for me, the limit of releasing the ghosts is 99%!"

Fang Yuan quickly estimated his own limit by leveraging on his experience as a True Divine. With this, he was able to have so much confidence and delicate control.

Against the pressure from the entire Paranormal Pawnshop, Fang Yuan had already released the ghosts' abilities to 60%!

"In fact... This is a competition to see who is better at controlling their abilities... This is a true fight among ghosts of the Strange Level, which involved the limits of control!"

Fang Yuan's face became increasingly ferocious and one of his eyes had already turned red. Together with his other gold eye, he looked extremely evil.

"However... My opponent is ultimately a curse of the Strange Level... These two things which I have sealed might not be able to hold up for long!"

A curse at the Strange Level was entirely more powerful than ghosts at the Murderous Level!

Fang Yuan could only last so long because of his heightened physical conditions and the fact that the Paranormal Pawnshop was too inflexible in dealing with threats.

Even so, without a strong foundation to resist the increasing pressure, Fang Yuan felt that his resistance was meaningless.

"The only solution is to release the ghosts up to my limit. With that, I will be able to severely injure the curse of the pawnshop and quickly locate its source to seal it!"

Fang Yuan's eyes glistened with excitement. "Release!"

"Rumble!"

Unknowingly, Lu Bingqi who was watching the fight the whole time started to shiver even more violently.

All he could see was two unknown evils appeared behind Fang Yuan, revealing their illusionary silhouettes.

One of them was a charred corpse with bloodshot eyes.

The other one was greenish-purple and gave off chilly vibes. A light blue glow was continuously pulsating from it!

"Eh? Something's not right..."

The chilly vibes suddenly disappeared and Fang Yuan shuddered. "It's the ghost at the beginning! It has regained all of its Strange Level abilities!"

The first ghost which he had sealed was created a curse created by the collective effort of the Tantai Family. It was initially at the level of 'Strange' but was injured by the 'Door', sustaining an injury which lasted more than 10 years.

However, in recent years, due to the fact that Fang Yuan had released it partially multiple times or the fact that it might be triggered by the pawnshop, it had restored its partial ability!

"Strange Level curses have their own quirks but all of them are troublesome. However, I am fortunate. The curse of the pawnshop seems to be more of the preparatory type. If given time to prepare, it will be able to create ghost swarms and humongous ghosts which will then pose problems for me. However, my surprise invasion this time will allow me to kill my way to its source!"

Fang Yuan focused and a streak of ice appeared before him which stretched into the sky.

"Warping space? I know that too!"

A tunnel was opened, revealing the other buildings within the pawnshop

"Pa!"

Fang Yuan stomped his feet on the ground. Like a cannonball, the wall in front crumbled, revealing the depths of the pawnshop.

Lu Bingqi was utterly stunned and dumbfounded.

"Ferocious! A ferocious being of the world! How could he forcefully tear down the pawnshop..."

Lu Bingqi's mouth was wide open but secretly, he was happy.

If Fang Yuan succeeded, would he have a better chance of survival?

"Wuuuu..."

A sense of fear suddenly filled his heart and a green glow started to form words before him:

"Emergency trade announcement!"

"Kill the invader and gain the rights to redeem your soul! This trade is open to all!"

...

All around the world, traders of the Paranormal Pawnshop twitched their eyebrows. Some of them were jubilant while others were deep in thought.

"It's panicking!"

As a trader, Lu Bingqi knew what was happening now. "The pawnshop is panicking! This means that Mister Fang Yuan really has the ability to destroy the pawnshop!"

At the same time, numerous traders started to appear before Fang Yuan. Some of them avoided him as soon as they arrived while others had a ferocious smile on their faces. "After killing you, I will be free!"

"Idiots!"

Without paying too much attention to them, Fang Yuan effortlessly wiped out all forms of resistance, turning them into a pile of bloodied mess.

"A single trade is enough for me to redeem my soul?"

In a flash, a pair of westerners appeared on the corridors of the pawnshop.

The female had skin as white as milk and she seemed focused. "If I use my black magic, I might succeed!"

"No, I wouldn't recommend you to do so!"

The big burly westerner pulled her to a corner.

"Thomas, why are you getting in my way?"

"I don't want to see you die for nothing! You must know that... this person is the enemy of the pawnshop!"

Thomas swallowed his saliva. "You know that I have the blood of a psychic. My predictions are always spot on. Be careful, he's here!"

In the blink of an eye, the female witch noticed a reckless silhouette coming towards them.

Before Fang Yuan, another black magician appeared. The black magician quickly chanted a mantra and a black hexagram array formed a protection around the black magician.

"It's President of Darkness's curse! Eh..."

As soon as the female witch became excited, the easterner waved his hands as though he was swatting a fly. In an instant, the protective curse was disabled and the president was being flung towards the wall, turning into a pile of blood and flesh. She did not even have the time or opportunity to retaliate.

"Thomas... You're right. This person is not someone we can afford to anger..."