

Horrors 1081

Chapter 1081: What Is It That You're Afraid of? [2 in 1]

The neighbor's emotion was being led by Chen Ge. Everyone was afraid that their secret would be discovered, so they all wanted to capture this killer who had escaped through the window as soon as possible. Chen Ge was very satisfied with this turn of events. He was about to say something else, but the middle-aged man with the hidden store of female underwear in his house suddenly chose to speak up again.

"Wait a minute, I do not disagree with the plan that we go through the houses one by one to search for the killer, but for the sake of security, I think we should go and inform the landlord about this first. And we should definitely get his opinion before we do anything too rash." The middle-aged man had encountered Chen Ge earlier. He knew Chen Ge from the latter's conversation and interaction with Wu You, so he had an inherent mistrust toward Chen Ge.

"No problem, we shall go and find the landlord now." Chen Ge agreed with the man to stop him from continuing to distract from Chen Ge's plan. Chen Ge did not wish to waste time on pointless arguments so as to prevent other accidents from happening. "We should hurry as fast as we can. The earlier we capture that ruthless murderer, the more likely we will save another innocent life."

This incident had happened too suddenly, and Chen Ge did not give the neighbors too much time to reflect on it. He dragged Wen Qing and Qu Yin directly into the stairwell. Even though he had the crowd on his side for now, once the neighbors calmed down, his situation would not have changed; he would still be in plenty of danger. The only thing he could do was make use of this opportunity and try to turn as many of the tenants against themselves as possible. That was the only way he could ensure his own safety.

"Qu Yin, why do you think the murderer targeted your family? Has your family made any enemies recently? Why would someone wish to harm your whole family?" To direct the thoughts of the neighbors, Chen Ge voluntarily asked Qu Yin some questions. Of course, his questions were all related to the murder case. On the surface, it sounded like Chen Ge was being concerned about Qu Yin, and the questions all struck at the center of the investigation.

Of course, Qu Yin knew very well the 'motive' behind the 'murderer's intention to target his family', but to not expose himself as an accomplice to the murderer, there was nothing he could do but to continue this play-acting with Chen Ge. After pretending to give it some serious thought, Qu Yin shook his head. "I have no idea why someone would harm my family members. We have always kept a low profile. I do not think we have offended or earned the ire of anyone before."

"Try to dig deeper. There has to be a reason somewhere. Is there any conflict between your family and the other tenants of this building?" Chen Ge continued to push. To deflect the suspicion away from himself, he tossed all the difficult questions to Qu Yin. Technically, he was now forcing a murderer to come up with a reason why someone would murder him.

If Qu Yin could not give an answer or gave the name of a random person, that person would instantly become the prime suspect in this case. If this happened at another residential area, being the prime suspect would not be that big a deal. At most, they would be invited to the police station to aid in the

investigation, but the situation here was completely different. Almost no one at this residential area was 'clean'; everyone had a secret that they did not wish to be known by others. In other words, no one here wished for their history and past to be exposed and investigated. It did not matter what they did behind closed doors normally, but at times like this, the secret that they had been hiding would become the noose that caused their death.

"I really cannot figure out anything." Qu Yin did not wish to be manipulated by Chen Ge. The surrounding tenants with secrets in their heart also astutely kept their mouths shut. They all knew very well the smartest choice at this moment was to zip their lips. One wrong word and they would be like moths flying voluntarily into a flame.

Xiao Sun sincerely wanted to have the killer captured, so he offered the information that he had.

"But I remember, a few nights ago, many neighbors were complaining when you argued with your father. The argument was so loud that many of us were not able to rest probably. In fact, one of the middle-aged uncles from the fifth floor purposely came down to warn you guys to keep the noise down.

"Oh, right, other than that, I believe the electrician on the eighth floor also got into a recent conflict with your father. I believe it had something to do with the electrical wiring. They even got into a fight once in the corridor. At the time, the electrician even threatened your father...

"What's the problem? Why are you guys looking at me like that? Have I misremembered? Was I wrong?"

Xiao Sun did not know the other side of his neighbors. He merely recited what he had seen. This also proved indirectly that he was one of the few 'normal' people in this building. He was not afraid of being investigated.

"The clues that you have given are too important! After we inform the landlord, we will start our investigation at the rooms of those people!" Chen Ge had high praise for Xiao Sun. It did not matter that Qu Yin refused to cooperate because Xiao Sun had helped Chen Ge tear open a gap between the tenants of the residential area. The few tenants that Xiao Sun mentioned earlier would become the first batch of sacrificial lambs. Xiao Sun had done a great job, but he did not realize how dangerous the situation he had put himself in was.

There were ten floors in total at the apartment building. The landlord lived alone on the ninth floor. The tenth floor was left empty, and all the rooms were locked. The crowd reached Room 901. Qu Yin knocked several times, but there was no answer. It appeared like no one was home.

"The landlord is probably out. Let's go to other places and check first. Perhaps we can return later."

"Wait a minute!" Chen Ge grabbed Qu Yin by his elbow. "The tenant of his apartment has just been murdered. That is huge news, and the landlord has not even shown up to investigate. Do you think that's normal?"

"Of course it is not normal, but I believe the landlord is not even in this building at the moment. He's probably gone to the other buildings of the residential area. The landlords of the few buildings in this residential area meet up to have a weekly meeting. So, that is probably where the landlord is now. He is probably meeting up with the other landlords in another building."

"A weekly meeting?" Chen Ge again gained more important information from what Qu Yin revealed.

"Yes, the landowners meet up to discuss important issues like the rent price, the environment around the residential area, and so on."

"You have a point, but you have missed one very important detail." Chen Ge slowed down for the point that he was about to make to sink in. "I have been to the first ground. The exit was locked, and the lock is applied from inside the building!"

"What is that able to prove? How does that contradict with what I said?"

"Only the landlord has the key to the exit, and since the lock was applied from the inside, it also means that the landlord must still be inside this building! If the landlord had left, the door would be locked from the outside!" Chen Ge's logical argument was flawless. And the words that he said carried a very serious implication to the rest of the neighbors. They instantly noticed the hot water that they could possibly be in. "The landlord is still inside the building, but he did not show up when there was a murder inside the apartment. That leads me to the conclusion that perhaps he has been harmed as well. Perhaps the killer got to him before we could."

Qu Gui being killed and the landlord being killed were two distinctly different scenarios because the latter had the spare keys to all the doors in the building. Now, even Qu Yin did not look so good. Events had developed far beyond his control.

"It is fine if you do not believe me. The easiest way to find out whether I am correct or not is to break down the door." Chen Ge carried his backpack and glanced at the door. He did not want to show Doctor Skull Cracker's hammer at that moment. "Do any of you have any tools at home? Human lives are at stake here. I know this is a serious case of trespassing, but I am sure that the landlord will be able to understand once we explain what is happening to him... provided he is still alive, that is."

"My house is currently being renovated. There's a whole set of tools. Wait a minute for me. I will go and grab them now." Auntie Ding was the first to speak up. Her tone was urgent and desperate. She volunteered to go and grab the tools, but in reality, she probably wanted to go back home to deal with other things, and the former was just an excuse.

"I have tools to open lock as well. I will go back home to check. I will be back." A few of the other tenants used the same excuse to leave as well. Chen Ge knew what they were up to, but he did not stop any of them. It was not that difficult to cover up and deal with the 'secret' in their own room in a short amount of time. The difficult part was to ensure that no traces were left behind.

A few minutes later, the few neighbors returned one after another. They carried various kinds of tools with them. With the cooperation of the whole group, they used almost half an hour to break down the front door of Room 901.

"This is so troublesome. If only all the rooms used a wooden door." Chen Ge pushed Qu Yin into the room. Qu Yin was angry, but there was nothing he could do.

"The room is very neat, and there is no sign of a scuffle or any blood. Looks like we have been worried for no reason." Qu Yin walked at the front of the group. This was probably his first time entering the

landlord's room. He appeared rather cautious; he did not dare get too close to the furniture inside the room.

"You seem to be quite afraid of the landlord. Am I right?" Chen Ge followed behind Qu Yin like a shadow. His voice drifted into Qu Yin's ears.

"Of course not, stop talking nonsense."

"Is that so?" Chen Ge gave Qu Yin a once-over. He noticed that the tenants had a very referential attitude toward the landlord. The anomalous attitude of Qu Yin when they were inside the landlord's room was the best proof of that. Chen Ge did not linger on this question. Chen Ge split the neighbors up to investigate the house. They opened the many doors before everyone congregated inside the bathroom. Pulling back the shower curtain, there was no bathroom or shower like one would expect; instead, there was a small television. Chen Ge tried to switch it on. The television was functioning normally, but the screen was only filled with static.

"Why would there be a television set inside the bathroom?" Qu Yin voiced the question on his mind.

"It is probably used to broadcast some unsightly content." Chen Ge studied the surroundings. The bathroom had no windows. After closing the bathroom door and pulling up the shower curtain, this would become a completely isolated space. Outsiders would have no idea what the landlord was doing there. Moving the television to the side, Chen Ge realized that there was a complicated trail of electrical wiring behind the device. His eyes followed the trail of wires, and he realized that all of them led upstairs. The electrical wiring of Room 901 was connected to the wiring of Room 1001. The landlord's secret should be hidden somewhere in Room 1001.

Chen Ge did not share his discovery with other people. He saw the problem from the complicated circuit. A normal television set did not require such complicated wiring. Chen Ge suspected that the landlord had installed surveillance cameras in hidden spots around the apartment, and the landlord probably spent most of his free time inside this bathroom, looking in on other people's lives. Chen Ge had a good guess what the landlord's secret was, but that did not help with the most imminent question—where was the landlord?

If the landlord had seen the monster from the cursed hospital through his surveillance, then he would be prepared to handle it. So, was it the monster from the cursed hospital who killed the landlord?

If they had done it, they could have gained the apartment keys from the landlord after killing them. They would not have needed to enter a contract with Qu Yin. Thus, the real sequence of events was probably something like this. The monster from the cursed hospital tried to reach out to the landlord first, but they were unable to locate him, so they settled for the second-best choice, which was to cooperate with Qu Yin. Then, they planned to slowly gang up with the rest of the tenants.

Chen Ge was slowly smoothing out the timeline in his mind. Then, the truth came to him. Someone in the building had found out about the landlord's secret. To ensure that their own secret was not exposed, one of them or even a group of them had gathered together to deal with the landlord. To be able to suspect such a thing, it would have to be someone who was familiar with the electrical wiring and their weird set up...

Chen Ge was instantly reminded of the electrician that Xiao Sun had mentioned earlier. The electrician lived on the eighth floor, and he was closest to the landlord's house, which was on the ninth floor, so naturally, he was the prime suspect.

"Take a look at this!" Auntie Ding opened the closet inside the landlord's bedroom. After she moved away the clothes, she revealed the many nails that were pinned to the inner wall of the closet. Every nail had a room number written above it. The numbers ranged from 101 to 1006.

"The key that hangs from the nail should correspond to the room number. The landlord has silently copied each of our house keys without telling us!" Auntie Ding appeared to be telling everyone about this on purpose. Her expression was one of shocked, but in Chen Ge's eyes, it appeared too forced and inorganic. The widening of the eyes, the gaping of the jaw, these were surface acting skills. Her performance did not come from the heart at all.

After seeing the keys, Chen Ge also subconsciously reacted with appropriate shock. Chen Ge's performance was much more natural. He used all his facial features to express the emotion of surprise. With the aid of body language, he was the embodiment of surprise. Instantly, the difference between amateur acting and professional acting was shown.

"Looks like the killer has taken all the spare room keys. This is not good news for any of us." Chen Ge soon calmed down. He knew that Auntie Ding herself was hiding something, but he did not say anything to expose her.

"Then, what should we do now? The killer is on a real rampage now. He has not only killed my family; he is also involved in the landlord's disappearance..." Qu Yin really did not expect things to go this way. He felt like he had been dragged by Chen Ge into a large hole, one that he would not be able to climb out of on his own. The other tenants were also starting to panic. They did not feel that threatened when Qu Gui was killed, but now that the landlord was missing, most of them were feeling anxious. A strange emotion was rippling through the crowd.

"We should go and check up with the electrician on the eighth floor first. Didn't your father get into an argument with him before he died?" Chen Ge and Qu Yin were about to leave Room 901 when the middle-aged man with the hidden female underwear in his house stepped forward. He blocked the way to the exit, and his eyes were blazing into Chen Ge.

"How can I help you?" Chen Ge's expression did not change. The man was unfazed. He was standing amid a group of creeps and murderers, but there was not a single trace of fear or uncertainty on his face.

"Even though the turnover rate of this building is very high, with new people moving in and old people moving out silently..." The middle-aged man strode to stand before Chen Ge. "I do not think I have seen you before. Did you just move here? If you just moved here, you should have met the landlord, and you are probably the last person to have seen the landlord alive."

"That person would be the killer, not me." Chen Ge pulled Wen Qing to his side. "There is a boy living in Room 401 called Xiang Nuan. You guys should have heard of him, right?"

When Chen Ge was speaking, his brain was churning. He rehearsed the spiel that he had come up with earlier in his mind.

"I do. The boy lives alone in Room 401. His father is dead, and his mother is a wily vixen. She is some man's kept mistress. She does not live here, and the boy occasionally leaves the apartment to go meet up with his mother." The middle-aged man's accusation caused Wen Qing's whole body to shake with anger.

"My big sister and I are here to look after Xiang Nuan on his mother's behalf. The boy is sick, and there is some problem with his head. I am the psychiatrist his mother hired, and my big sister will look after his living arrangements." Chen Ge mentioned many other details about Xiang Nuan before the middle-aged man slowly moved away.

"Looks like the boy's mother had found the boy a good father figure this time. There is no need for them to worry about money anymore." The middle-aged man's gaze lingered on Wen Qing for a long time.

Chen Ge stood between Wen Qing and the middle-aged man. With a smile still stuck on his face, he said, "For a while now, you have been trying to make trouble for me. What is it that you're afraid of?"

Chapter 1082: Infighting [2 in 1]

"Afraid? What should I be afraid of?" The middle-aged man's expression became unnatural. He had no idea where Chen Ge's confidence to accuse him came from.

"I am trying to help everyone find and investigate the killer, but you have been trying time and time again to change the subject. Could it be that you know something but have decided not to share it with the rest of us?" Chen Ge narrowed his eyes. "At the time, the murderer escaped from the sixth-floor window. He would not have gone far. He should have been hiding on the fifth, sixth, or seventh floors. Those are the three floors that were most probably his hiding place. If we'd started our search on those three levels, there was a very high chance we would have been able to block and apprehend the killer, but you insisted on us coming to find the landlord first."

Chen Ge used a manipulative way of phrasing it. At the time, the middle-aged man only suggested they find the landlord, but Chen Ge made it sound like the middle-aged man had given that as an order. It was the middle-aged man who had allowed the killer to escape.

"The landlord lives on the ninth floor, and this place is very far from the crime scene. I suspect you were purposely trying to lead us away so that you could buy some time for the killer to escape."

"That is ludicrous! Everyone, do not listen to him. He is lying! I've done no such thing!"

"You led us all to the ninth floor, and somehow, you appeared to know that the landlord has been harmed, and thus, no one would come to open the door for us. To get the front door open, we have wasted yet another half an hour here. The time wasted was more than enough for the killer to remove the blood evidence from his body." Chen Ge's words stuck into the middle-aged man's body like sharp knives. "It is not my wish to suspect you, but there are just too many coincidences that do not line up. I for one do not believe in so many coincidences. It feels more like you are purposely trying to buy time for the real killer to escape."

The way the neighbors looked at the middle-aged man slowly turned unfriendly and hostile.

"Listen to me! I really had no idea that the landlord has been harmed! If I knew that, I would not have said the things that I did! Trust me, I am completely innocent!" The middle-aged man tried his best to

argue his case. Chen Ge stood to the side and watched. He did not care for the middle-aged man's defense. He merely wanted to find an excuse, an excuse that could allow him access into the middle-aged man's house. None of the tenants were 'clean'. As long as Chen Ge was given a chance to enter their room, even if there was no evidence, Chen Ge would try his best to 'find' the evidence.

"I have known Brother Man for many years already. I know his personality very well. I believe that he would not have done something like that. I believe he is really innocent." Auntie Ding suddenly jumped out to the middle-aged man's rescue. Just as the latter was about to sigh in relief, Auntie Ding suddenly added the following to push him further into the abyss. "But like the young man said, everything feels to coincidental. To prove Brother Man's innocence, how about we start the search at Brother Man's place? I believe firmly that he is innocent, and I am sure that a search of his place will clear his name right up. That way, we can move on to the capture of the real killer after dealing with this misunderstanding."

Auntie Ding sounded like she was defending the middle-aged man. In fact, she had stated explicitly that she believed in the middle-aged man's innocence, but in reality, she was damning the middle-aged man. As an old tenant of the building, she should know the middle-aged man's secret quite well. She knew that there were things inside brother Man's home that could not be exposed to the public.

After hearing what Auntie Ding had to say, the middle-aged man's expression turned ugly. He did not expect that the final knife that determined his fate at this crucial moment would come from his own neighbor, Auntie Ding.

With dark and consuming eyes, the middle-aged man stared at Auntie Ding, his hands clenching into fists. Chen Ge did not step in and say anything; his gaze merely wandered between the middle-aged man and Auntie Ding. Auntie Ding was the first to discover that the spare keys inside the closet had been stolen. Her reaction was extremely unnatural. For Chen Ge, Auntie Ding was likely related to the landlord's death. She was probably one of the killers that took the landlord's life. This would explain why she had chosen to speak up at this moment. She wanted to push the blame for the landlord's death onto the middle-aged man.

Of course, this would only work if the middle-aged man had something to hide. And honestly, he deserved it for his big mouth. If he did not bring up anything about the landlord, no one would have come up to the ninth floor and found out about the landlord's disappearance and possible death. Now, those people who had harmed the landlord naturally would not let him go. Since he had volunteered as a scapegoat, the best possible way was to push the blame onto him.

Chen Ge understood that psychology very well, and that was what he had been doing when he accosted the middle-aged man. He was not looking for an argument for no reason; he was trying to push the middle-aged man into the position of the suspect who might have killed the landlord. He understood that once he had done that, there would be someone would jump out to support him. They would pin the middle-aged man down and deliver his death sentence. The tenants who were cleared of their suspicion started to gang up against those who had not had their suspicion cleared, and now even the tenants who were not suspected started to have cracks in their camaraderie. If this continued, without doing anything, Chen Ge would be able to get closer to his goal.

"This is not the time for infighting. The most important thing that we need to do now is find the killer who murdered Qu Gui!" Seeing the altercation between the tenants, Chen Ge could not have been more

overjoyed in his heart, but the words that came out from his lips hoped that they would put aside their differences and work together. "We should all calm down! Let's return to the initial hypothesis. Xiao Sun told us that the electrician on the eighth floor got into an argument with Qu Gui and threatened his life. The electrician has motive, so we should start our investigation with him."

Chen Ge did not let Auntie Ding gather the crowd against the middle-aged man. He wanted to retain the middle-aged to create more cracks in the future. After leaving Room 901, Chen Ge walked at the front with a smile on his face. Behind him trailed the tenants from the building; this was truly an astounding sight.

"Is anyone home?" With Xiao Sun's direction, the crowd reached the house of the electrician. The knocking echoed down the corridor, shattering the silence of the eighth floor. Everyone had their eyes on the door before them. The tenants were curious about the electrician's secret as well. They were eager to expose his secret; this kind of rush was something that was hard to describe. After several knocks, footsteps finally came from inside the room, and the front door was pulled open slightly.

"How can I help you?" A man with long beard appeared at the door. He appeared to be quite reticent. His eyes were bloodshot like he had not had a good night's sleep in a long time.

"There's been a murder. We just came to warn you about it. We wish for you to be careful."

"Noted," the electrician said and was about to close the door, but Chen Ge reached out to grab the door and stop him.

"What are you doing?"

"This is not what I wish to do but a consensus that has been reached by everyone in the building." Chen Ge pointed to the tenants behind him. "This is for everyone's personal safety. I hope you will understand and cooperate."

"We now suspect that you are somehow involved in the murder. If you are innocent, then please step out of the way. We will not mess up your house. We just wish to confirm some things." Xiao Sun was not a cunning person. He shared their purpose for being there directly.

"I am suspected to be involved in the murder?" The electrician lifted his head. His bloodshot eyes swept to the left and right of Chen Ge as if using his eyes to communicate with someone. Chen Ge knew that Auntie Ding was standing on his left side behind him. Things were getting more and more interesting. When the electrician knew that he was in trouble, he turned to Auntie Ding immediately. This proved that they were both in on something. Combined with the earlier speculation that Auntie Ding was related to the landlord's death, did this not prove that the electrician was also related to the landlord's death?

When Chen Ge discovered the complicated wiring in Room 901, Chen Ge had already suspected that the killer was the electrician. This was because the electrician was probably the first person to discover the landlord's secret. Chen Ge was facing away from Auntie Ding, so he had no idea what kind of hint Auntie Ding had provided to the electrician, but he saw that after the brief eye contact, the electrician's expression turned uglier.

"I've been inside my room alone throughout the night. I have not left my house at all. You've got the wrong person." The electrician refused to step aside and got into a stalemate with the people at the corridor. Chen Ge felt like they had wasted too much time there. If the electrician refused to budge, then the rest of the plan would halt there. The tenants there were all incredibly cunning. Other than Xiao Sun, no one was willing to stick their neck out. Chen Ge had no choice but to do this on his own.

"The killer has threatened everyone's safety. Your refusal to let us go in proves that you surely have something to hide." Chen Ge's attitude turned firmer. "We are not asking for your opinion; we are merely here to inform you of that."

"Inform me? We are all tenants here. Who gave any of you the right to enter my private home? Preposterous!"

"We have already patiently explained the situation to you, but you still refused to let us through. Looks like you are really related to Qu Gui's death. You have something to hide!" Chen Ge's patience was wearing thin. His hand that gripped the door pulled with strength. "Let us in. There must be some clues inside his room!"

With Chen Ge leading the way, the other tenants that did not have much interaction with the electrician normally started to help. Against the strength of so many people, the electrician was unable to keep his door shut.

"What the hell! Stop this nonsense!"

The front door was yanked open. Chen Ge was the first to charge in. His nostrils flared. Chen Ge sniffed a burnt smell in the air. "What is being burnt?"

The room was very messy, and trash littered every corner. There was barely a space for people to stand. The neighbors squeezed into the room and trampled over the stuff on the ground. The electrician appeared to have given up. He turned to face the door and kept his head lowered. He kept his expression from the sight of everyone else.

"Qu Gui was stabbed to death, so the killer would have been covered in a copious amount of blood. There is another thing that we need to pay attention to. The killer planned everything out before they committed the crime, so that means that they probably have been planning this for a long time. Therefore, there might be something related to the murder inside his notebooks."

The tenants that followed behind Chen Ge started to ransack the room. Throughout the whole process, the electrician stood at the door with his head lowered, and not a peep came out of the man. "His whole body is incredibly tense. He is afraid."

The tenants searched for a long time, but they could find any evidence that tied the electrician to the murder. Auntie Ding walked toward Chen Ge. "Perhaps we have misjudged him. As messy as this place is, there is no sign of blood. He does not have the habit of reading or taking notes. There are no reading or writing materials anywhere in this place."

"Looks like he is really not the killer." Xiao Sun walked out from the bedroom with a frown. He was still an innocent child. He had not gone through the harsh reality of the society yet. After knowing that he

was wrong, he ran to the electrician's side. "I am so sorry. We only hoped to capture the killer as soon as possible. I will treat you a dinner in the future and consider that an apology for this transgression."

"Now, can you please leave me alone?" the electrician growled. It was clear that he was very angry.

"Of course," Auntie Ding said on everyone's behalf. The rest also slowly shuffled to the front door.

"Wait a minute." Chen Ge stood inside the room and suddenly said, "Do you guys smell something burning?"

"The place is so messy. It is probably something that has gone moldy." Auntie Ding was obviously trying to defend the electrician. "Let's not waste time here anymore. We should go and check the other suspects."

"A moldy food wouldn't give off a burnt smell." Chen Ge followed the trail of stench and came to the bedroom on the right. "Do you live alone?"

The electrician lifted his head to look at Chen Ge. His voice was hoarse. "Yes, I do live alone."

"You live alone, but both of the bedrooms have king sized beds. You sure live in the lap of luxury."

"What does that have to do with anything?"

"I am just curious." Chen Ge looked at the beds that had recently been changed. The covers looked washed and clean. It was a bright contrast to the mess that was the rest of the house. "Which bedroom do you normally sleep in?"

"This is my house. I can sleep in whichever room that I want. Why should I answer that? Does that have to do with the murder that you are talking about?" The electrician glared with his bloodshot eyes. He had been suppressing anger. The man probably had anger management issues, and he had been trying to reign it in before the public.

"My guess is that you normally sleep in the bedroom on the left because of the array of everyday objects that are placed there. In contrast, the bedroom on the right is much simpler in nature. In fact, it does not look occupied. It feels more like this is your workshop." Chen Ge kicked away some of the wiring on the ground. A few of them, he noticed, were connected to the space under the bed. "But why would a workshop need such a big bed?"

Chen Ge grabbed the newly changed covers and pulled them off without warning and tossed them to the ground. The electrician's face blanched immediately, and he took a subconscious step back. Underneath the cover was a thick mattress. There were many burnt spots on the mattress, and that was where the smell came from.

After taking a glance at the mattress, Auntie Ding quickly moved her gaze away. "We should go to the other rooms. There is nothing to see hear. Everything looks normal to me."

"The bed is of good quality, and it is incredibly soundproof and can resist shaking," Chen Ge said as he yanked off the mattress. He pulled the whole mattress away. A stingy burnt smell rushed out and assaulted the nose of everyone present. Underneath the mattress was a wooden bed frame. Chen Ge did not hesitate and pushed the bed frame to the side. The scene that was exposed was revolting. Underneath the bedframe was the body of a boy. Many electrical clamps were connected to his body.

His skin was seriously charred, but the real fatal wound could be found around his neck. He had been strangled to his death; the signs of strangling were quite obvious.

"Jia Qi!" Auntie Ding dropped to the ground once the boy was exposed. She crawled to the bedside and wanted to hug the boy's dead body. Auntie Ding wailed like a traumatized mother, but Chen Ge saw very clearly that the woman could not even fake a single crocodile tear.

"Capture that electrician!" Xiao Sun shouted loudly. When Chen Ge pulled back the mattress, the electrician had already sneaked out from the room.

"He killed Jia Qi! How could he torture such a sweet boy! I will kill him! I will kill him!" Auntie Ding seemed to have gone berserk from the trauma. She grabbed the fruit knife on the nearby coffee table and charged out. She was quite largely built and was as large as a man. She ran quite fast as well.

"Quick! The murderer has been found! We should follow and captured him!" Xiao Sun ran out with passion. The other neighbors also mobilized. Only Chen Ge and Wen Qing stayed in the bedroom.

"Aren't we going to follow them?" Wen Qing asked softly.

"The electrician is not going to survive. Auntie Ding will do everything within her power to kill him."

"You're right. Auntie Ding has been defending the man. To find out that her trust has been betrayed, she must be in great pain."

"The reason she needs to kill the electrician is not out of pain but fear. This boy should be Auntie Ding's 'present' to the electrician. They are both responsible for the landlord's death. The electrician knows Auntie Ding's many secrets. Auntie Ding is afraid that once the electrician is captured, he will sell her out as well so she will definitely kill him before he is given a chance to speak." Chen Ge looked at the young boy that was propped up like a grotesque exhibit, and the smile slowly disappeared from his face. He hissed through gritted teeth. "This bunch of animals."

Wen Qing churned Chen Ge's words in her mind. She had been following Chen Ge and experienced the same thing, but she had no idea how Chen Ge managed to come up with the hypotheses for so many things.

Chapter 1083: Who Will Be Next? [2 in 1]

Standing next to Chen Ge, Wen Qing did not know what to say or ask. She was afraid that she might accidentally expose some important information. After all, by now, she at least understood that there was no one in this building that could truly be trusted. One wrong step and she could put them in extreme danger.

"Why don't you go and accompany Granny Lee in the living room? I will stay to investigate what happened here."

Wen Qing nodded and left.

Chen Ge stayed in the bedroom alone. He closed the bedroom door and knelt by the bed to inspect the boy's dead body. The burning from electrocution, the bruises from heavy beatings, Chen Ge's eyes finally landed around the boy's neck.

“He was strangled to death by electrical wires. There are wooden chips lodged in the boy’s fingernails. Before he perished, his arms were tied to the bed frame...”

Chen Ge undid the rope around the body. He placed the clean cover over the boy.

“The electrician looked like a reticent and harmless worker on the surface, but in reality, he has a flaming temper. Yet, he has a knack for reining it in around others. And then he vents it through torturing others who are weaker than him. The man is rotten through and through.”

The scary thing was that the electrician was not an exception to the rule at this apartment building. Chen Ge started to think deeper into other consequences.

“Under the limitation of law and morality, their actual nature was hidden and closed away, but in the world behind Xiang Nuan’s door, the most disgusting and horrid facet of their personality is exposed. This door appears to purposely highlight the sin in human nature, and it twists everyone into monstrous beings.”

Chen Ge tried to analyze the ghost fetus’ thoughts, but with the meagre number of clues that he had so far, he was unable to come to any concrete conclusion. Rummaging through the backpack, Chen Ge noticed that blood vessels had started to surface on the comic. He tried to summon his workers, but unfortunately, he still got no response.

“Chen Ge!” Wen Qing’s voice came from outside the bedroom, and then the door was pushed open. “Something seems to have happened downstairs!”

The sound of screaming, running, wailing, and crying were mixed together as they drifted up from downstairs. It sounded like a battlefield down there.

“Do not worry. Let them deal with this among themselves for now.” Chen Ge slowly walked out from the room. The faces of the tenants that were in the room earlier flashed across his mind. “Who will be next?”

Chen Ge’s group soon arrived at the second floor. The smell of blood lingered in the air. There were even fresh blood stains that were noticeable on the staircase.

“What is going on here?” Before Chen Ge got near, he was able to hear Auntie Ding crying. The rest of the tenants blocked the corridor. They formed a wall that did not allow anyone to pass.

“The electrician is dead.” Xiao Sun leaned against the wall, and his face was pale as a sheet.

“He’s dead?” Chen Ge looked very surprised. He picked up his pace and crossed through the crowd. “Move out of the way please!”

Standing at the corner between the first floor and the second floor, Chen Ge appeared to have frozen. He could see Auntie Ding kneeling on the ground, her lips mumbling Jia Qi’s name again and again. Both of her arms and her upper body were covered in fresh blood. Auntie Ding appeared to have lost her grasp on reality due to overwhelming sadness. Others had trouble getting close to her, or to be more precise, no one was willing to get close to Auntie Ding in her current state.

“You... have killed him?” Chen Ge’s pupils were shivering. “But he was our only clue!”

"Jia Qi was the first child that I adopted. He went missing in this residential area! I have been looking so hard for him!" Auntie Ding's hair was disheveled as she pressed her hands into the pool of blood on the ground. "That was my child. Can you understand how that would have affected a mother like myself? Do you know how I felt when I saw that child in that state in his room..."

Auntie Ding's words petered off into a blubbing mess. All the energy in her body seemed to have drained from her as she collapsed in the pool of blood.

"Actually, it would be wrong to say that Sister Ding has killed him. I saw with my own eyes that there was an altercation between Sister Ding and the electrician. Both of them slipped down the stairs, and the fruit knife just so happened to get stuck in the electrician's neck. I suppose, in a way, this is karma working her magic. No one is to blame but the man himself." The one who spoke was a tenant from the fifth floor. He was very tall, and he always stood together beside Auntie Ding. This was the first time he had spoken with Chen Ge.

"An accident you say?" Chen Ge's gaze moved past Auntie Ding as he looked down the first-floor corridor. The electrician had already run out of the stairwell and was racing to get out of the building. His body was lying near the entrance, and the locked front door even had the man's bloody handprints on it.

"With a knife puncturing through his neck, even if he was not dead, I doubt he wouldn't be able to speak anymore. This is so unfortunate. The trail of clues that we found with such difficulty has been wiped away just like that." Chen Ge's tone was quite helpless. He then turned to the tall guy. "And who are you? I do not think we have met before."

"My surname is Li."

"I am sorry if this is a forward question, but why do you reek of medicine?"

"I am a practicing pediatrician."

"Isn't the medicine meant for children supposed to have as diluted a smell as possible to prevent them from gagging on the taste?" Before waiting for the man to answer, Chen Ge changed the subject. "I was not here when the electrician died. Did anyone hear what he said before he died?"

"He called out Auntie Ding's full name..." Xiao Sun started to say something, but he was rudely interrupted by Doctor Li.

"The electrician is already dead. What we need to do now is confirm as soon as possible whether he is the murderer behind Qu Gui's death."

"But..." Xiao Sun insisted on saying something, but this time, Chen Ge cut him off.

"Indeed, the most important thing that we needed to do now is capture the culprit. If the electrician is Qu Gui's murderer, of course, that would be best, but I am afraid that he is just an accomplice, and the real murderer is still hiding among us."

A living human being was murdered just like that before their eyes. The atmosphere inside the apartment building became more suffocating.

"I will take Auntie Ding back to her room for now. She must have been greatly traumatized to have seen her adopted child in such a state." Doctor Li tried to pick up Auntie Ding from the pool of blood, but he failed even after several tries. He turned to the crowd and waved at a short guy. "Big Head, would you mind coming over to help me?"

The short man was bald, and a large part of his face was swollen, giving him the look of a monster. Big Head and Doctor Li carried Auntie Ding back to the fourth floor while Chen Ge watched them walk away quietly.

Doctor Li is tall and well built. He looks quite strong. As large as Auntie Ding is, it is impossible for him to be incapable of carrying her on his own. He was merely looking for an excuse to get Big Head to leave this place with them. The three of them should know each other, and they operate as a group.

Doctor Li, Big Head, Auntie Ding, and the electrician—Chen Ge now suspected that it was the four of them who cooperated to kill the landlord and then stole the spare keys to all the rooms. With regards to their motive, Chen Ge had a fairly good guess. The landlord had found out about their secrets, so he needed to die.

"Er... So, how shall we deal with the electrician's body?" Qu Yin felt a headache coming. Qu Gui's dead body was still lying in his living room, and now they had another dead body in the building. Their initial intention was to find the killer, but somehow, things had started to get out of control as if there was a pair of hands that had been pushing them around for the tenants to turn on each other.

"Let's just ignore that for now. I just discovered something very scary." Xiao Sun only dared to speak after he saw Doctor Li walk further away. "The electrician was pushed down the stairs. The person who dealt the final blow was not Auntie Ding but Doctor Li. At the time, they were the ones who were chasing after the electrician the most passionately. They were the most desperate to hunt him down."

"Jia Qi is Auntie Ding's adopted son. Why would Doctor Li react so brashly? He does not look like a vindictive person to me." Chen Ge was slowly laying the trail for the tenants to consider. He could not be as direct as Xiao Sun because he still had no idea how many people in the building were involved in the murder of the landlord. But there was one thing that was for certain—the number of people involved would not that be high, or else they would not need to be afraid of Chen Ge at this moment, and they did not to sacrifice the electrician.

"I also think that is quite weird." The middle-aged man who had the female underwear stored away in his home stood in the corner alone. Now he had decided not to trust anyone, which honestly was a bright decision. "That Ding woman has been acting very strangely today. She treats her adopted children so badly normally. Compared to human beings, she treats them more like pets. She beats and scolds them for the smallest transgression or when she is in a bad mood."

"So, it is your opinion that Auntie Ding did not kill the electrician out of revenge but to cover up something else, right?"

"I did not say anything like that!" The middle-aged man looked at Chen Ge and quickly waved his hands. He was an old tenant here; he knew how dangerous it was to run his mouth.

"Then, should we go and ask Wu You? He is the child who lives in Room 301. The tenants of the building all say that the boy likes to lie, but I personally think that the child is quite an obedient kid," Xiao Sun

suddenly said, and what he said caused the middle-aged man to break out in cold sweat. "He is probably this way because he has been left alone for a long time and lacks human company. Well, we have a psychiatrist among us now. Perhaps this is the best opportunity for us to approach him."

The middle-aged man shook his head while trying to calm himself down. "The kid, Wu You spews out nothing but lies. Not a single word out of his mouth can be trusted. Plus, he is just a small child. What does he know? If you expose him to a dead body, you might worsen his condition."

"Alright, I was just giving a suggestion. After all, the child is seen running all over the building sometimes. Perhaps he might know something." Xiao Sun was analyzing the situation rationally. He had no idea that he had made himself a target in most people's eyes.

Chen Ge also wiped away the sweat from his forehead. As a normal person amid a group of crazed murderers, the first thing one needed to learn to do was not mimic a detective to solve the case but learn how to properly protect oneself. Chen Ge understood that Xiao Sun was just trying to help, but he did not approve of his dangerous method.

"I also do not think we should bring this to a child, but with a murderer on the loose, it is too dangerous for Wu You to stay at home alone. We should get him to stay with us." When Chen Ge started with his sentence, the middle-aged man was nodding vehemently, but when Chen Ge finished the rest of the sentence, the man's head froze in midair.

"Wouldn't it be very inconvenient to bring a child with us in a situation like this?"

"It will be fine. I will look after him. We shall go to Room 301 to get Wu You now." Chen Ge headed toward the third floor. He just arrived at the third-floor corridor when he saw a boy's head poke out from the door of the room at the end of the corridor. It was quite scary seeing that in the middle of the night.

"Wu You, there is a murderer among us in the building. It is too dangerous for you to stay alone. Why don't you come with us for now?" Chen Ge reached out to grab Wu You's hand, but the latter skipped away from him.

"Murderer?" Wu You looked at Chen Ge and the rest of the tenants. He used his very juvenile voice to ask, "But aren't all you murderers?"

"See, all the boy does is lie." The middle-aged man shrugged, looking as helpless as he could.

"Since you know we are all murderers, why do you still live here? Aren't you afraid of us?" Chen Ge looked at the boy before him.

"I am waiting for my parents."

"If something happens to you, your parents won't be able to find you, so you'd better come with us. This is for your own good." Chen Ge was quite forceful when he was negotiating with this boy. Grabbing Wu You by his hand, Chen Ge had the boy stick close to him. Realizing how firm Chen Ge was with his decision, the middle-aged man suddenly professed that he had a stomachache and needed to go home for a while. Chen Ge did not say anything to stop him and allowed him to go.

Actually, Chen Ge knew that the middle-aged man was only making an excuse. He was worried that Wu You would accidentally sell him out, so he quickly hurried home to destroy any incriminating evidence.

After the middle-aged man left, the rest of them moved to Auntie Ding's room on the fourth floor. Doctor Li called after Big Head and Auntie Ding naturally because they had something to discuss. Chen Ge did not wish to give them too much time to come up with a solution or an excuse. When they came to the fourth floor, before they reached Auntie Ding's place, Chen Ge saw Big Head guarding outside Auntie Ding's room.

"Is Sister Ding feeling better?"

"With Doctor Li looking after her, I'm sure she will be fine." Big Head might look scary, but his tone was friendly. He gave off the feeling of those honest floormats that were easily bullied by others.

"After you guys left, something else happened. There is a question that I need to ask Auntie Ding in person."

"But she still needs to rest."

"You'd better step out of the way. This matter is very serious." Qu Yin, Xiao Sun, Wen Qing, and Granny Lee were following behind Chen Ge. They had the numerical advantage. "I will enter the room alone so that we won't disturb Sister Ding's rest."

"Okay then." Big Head knocked on the door. More than ten seconds later, the door opened, and Chen Ge walked in alone. Even though Auntie Ding could not be called young anymore, the home decoration was extremely pink and fluffy. It felt more like the room of a teenage girl. Once Chen Ge entered the room, he was assaulted by the heavy mist of perfume and air freshener that hung in the air. He coughed lightly and closed the door behind him. Auntie Ding was lying on the couch, and Doctor Li stood beside her. They did not look happy to see Chen Ge walk in.

"How can we help you?"

"Do any of you know the salacious-looking middle-aged man that lives on the third floor?"

"What about him?"

"Just now, he said that the electrician did not trip on the stairs and fell but was pushed down the stairs, and then he sneaked in a suggestion to tell us to go and ask Wu You about it," Chen Ge said with a stone-cold expression.

"Did you find anything out from the boy?" Auntie Ding's face was pale, and her voice was involuntarily shaking.

"The child was seriously traumatized. We cannot understand what he is trying to express. He kept saying things like seeing Auntie Ding carrying children up and down the stairs and seeing the children's ghost appearing around him." As if he was unable to see Auntie Ding's paling face, Chen Ge continued to speak. "But the key is not the boy but that strange man living on the third floor. He stays the opposite of Wu You. I suspect that it might be him who fed these words to Wu You. After all, even if a child likes to lie, why would he choose these things to lie about?"

"You have a point there." Both Doctor Li and Auntie Ding nodded at the same time.

“Other than that, I realized something else. The middle-aged man appeared to be purposely hindering us from finding out the truth. I suspect...” Chen Ge raised his head, and his eyes were shining. “Could he be the culprit behind the landlord’s death?”

“That is very possible. There are many strange things about that man.” Color returned to Auntie Ding’s face, and even her words flowed more naturally. “There’s a lot of female underwear hidden in that man’s room. Who knows where he got it all? In any case, that is a very disgusting man.”

“You guys suspect him, and he has been trying to throw the suspicion onto you.” Chen Ge appeared conflicted. “I also do not know who to believe. How about this? In a bit, we will pretend to check one of the rooms on the third floor, but before he knows what’s happening, we will barge into his house for a spot check and see if we can come up with any evidence. If there is anything related to the landlord that can be discovered at his house, we can confirm for sure that he is the landlord’s killer.”

Chen Ge was making a very brave move. The real purpose of his plan was for the real murderer to produce the evidence themselves. It was a trap within a trap.

Chapter 1084: Black Fog [2 in 1]

Chen Ge was not going to waste any more time with the tenants. He wanted to get this over with as soon as possible, and that was why he came up with this rather incendiary suggestion. Once Doctor Li and Auntie Ding calmed down, regained their senses, and found out the truth, they would surely realize that it was Chen Ge who had been pulling the strings and the person that they needed to get rid of was Chen Ge all along.

Dancing on the tip of the knife, Chen Ge had known his condition from the very beginning, but this was the only chance he had. There was no other choice for him. He needed to remove as many tenants inside the building before Doctor Li and Auntie Ding came to. When there were too few of them to form an alliance to threaten him, he could openly take over the building already.

“Sister Ding, you’d better get a good rest inside the house. Shut your windows and doors, and take care of yourself. Big Head and I will go and take a look.” Doctor Li’s expression had not changed. Chen Ge had no idea what the man was thinking. However, there was one thing that was clear; Doctor Li was highly interested in Chen Ge’s suggestion. This was an opportunity for them to deflect the suspicion that would have landed on them. Naturally, they would not give up this chance.

Seeing Doctor Li take the bait, Chen Ge stood up and turned to Auntie Ding with concern. “I cannot be sure that the person who killed the landlord and the person who killed Qu Gui are the same person, so you have to be careful when you are staying at home all by yourself.”

“I will be careful.” Auntie Ding did not seem to key into the deeper layer of meaning behind Chen Ge’s words. She lay on the couch and appeared as weak as possible.

“Let’s go. Sister Ding needs her rest.” Doctor Li was the first to open the front door and leave. He then proceeded to whisper a few words in Big Head’s ear. Using Ghost Ear, Chen Ge managed to pick up the words ‘letter of commitment’. With no change to his expression, he followed Doctor Li slowly out of the room. In terms of cunningness and slyness, Doctor Li was a pretty good player, but he had greatly underestimated Chen Ge. Perhaps he had subconsciously placed himself in the role of a predator, and the rest of them were only the prey. The multiple kills that they had committed fed into the devil inside

their heart, and normal people were merely prey to be had in their eyes. If he could successfully push the blame onto the others, that was the best, but if that failed, they would simply kill everyone who knew about their secret.

This kind of twisted psychology blinded him to Chen Ge's suspicion toward him, and he had not been paying this outsider much attention. Then again, this was not entirely his fault. Who would have thought an outsider could manage to reconstruct most of the truth within such a short period of time? Of course, as time moved on, his suspicion toward Chen Ge would only continue to grow, and the thought of murdering Chen Ge would only get stronger.

Auntie Ding lived on the fourth floor. Big Head was Auntie Ding's neighbor. After Doctor Li whispered to him, Big Head offered a flimsy excuse to return to his own house. Half a minute later, Big Head came out of his house and looked perfectly normal.

"Sister Ding needs to rest, so we should leave her at home." Chen Ge scanned the group. "Has the uncle from the third floor not returned?"

"We should go and find him ourselves. That will save us some precious time," Doctor Li said directly. He probably did not even realize that every single word that Chen Ge said was measured to purposely lead him to do certain things. He did not realize that he was being controlled. He merely thought that it was comfortable to 'work with' Chen Ge. It was like when he wanted to go for a nap, someone was there to hand him a pillow. The group came to the door of the house of the middle-aged man on the third floor. Chen Ge knocked for quite some time before the middle-aged man came to open the door.

"I am so sorry. My stomach is not feeling too good. I was on the toilet. Come on, which room should we go and inspect next?" Beads of sweat slithered down the middle-aged man's face, and he was catching his breath while speaking. Honestly, he did not look like he had just come from the toilet.

"We plan to inspect the rooms one by one. Since we are already now, why don't we start with your place?" Without waiting for the middle-aged man to agree, Doctor Li pushed his way into the room. Big Head followed closely behind him.

"You can do that, of course, but please do not mess with my stuff. I have many valuable collections here." The middle-aged man appeared to have dealt with his 'secret' already, so he was not worried that Doctor Li would be able to find anything to expose him. Looking at the incredibly confident middle-aged man, Chen Ge shook his head. If there was no secret to be found, a secret could be planted. Since both of the parties in this twisted game were unrelated to him, Chen Ge felt more like an observer. The group of people entered the room. The middle-aged man's room was very messy. Many beer cans and everyday trash littered the ground. The cleanest spot inside the house was the wall filled with posters of beautiful girls in skimpy clothing.

"There are so many pairs of eyes staring at you at all times. Don't you feel uncomfortable sleeping at night?" Chen Ge's attitude was completely different from when they were searching the electrician's room. He kept staring at the posters on the wall and engaging the middle-aged man in conversation, creating opportunities for Doctor Li and Big Head to plant the evidence.

"Why would I be afraid looking at them at night? In fact, wouldn't that be a source of joy?"

“What is so joyful about staring at a bunch of posters?” Chen Ge glanced at the sofa and realized that the female underwear was still haphazardly tossed on the sofa. They had not been cleaned away, so it meant that the middle-aged man did not mind others noticing them. The underwear was not part of his real secret. Initially, Chen Ge thought that the middle-aged man was a fetishist, but now he realized that things were not that simple. This salacious middle-aged man collected more than just female underwear; his secret went deeper than that.

“Hey! Guys, come and take a look!” Doctor Li’s voice came out from the middle-aged man’s bedroom. He attracted everyone’s attention, and they were squeezed outside the bedroom door. Peeling back the black cloth that covered the cupboard, Doctor Li opened the cupboard door. It was filled with various porn videos and books that had incredibly suggestive covers on them.

“This is my personal collection. I keep them to myself and have not shared or sold them to any underage kids. That is not against the law, is it?” the middle-aged man argued confidently as he leaned against the door.

“Is it possible that there are some other recordings that are mixed among these?”

“If you do not trust me, feel free to peruse them on your own, but it will probably take month to look through all of them, right?” The middle-aged man walked over to close the cupboard door, but suddenly, Doctor Li reached out to grab his hand. “Open this locked chest under the bed for us to see. We want to know what is inside.”

“Don’t push it! How is that any of your business?”

“You do not wish to be mistaken for the killer, do you? Just open it up. If it has nothing to do with the murders, we will naturally leave you be,” Doctor Li said with an expressionless face. His tone was cold and caused the middle-aged man’s spine to tingle with fear.

“Fine, I will cooperate with you for now. When we reach your place, I will also remember to give it a good search.” The middle-aged man retorted with an empty threat. He took out the key from his pocket and opened the wooden box that was previously hidden under the bed. A female body model was placed inside the box. It was very well made. From afar, it looked no different from the body of an actual female.

“This is my wife. She has accompanied me for many years.” The middle-aged stood next to the wooden box and refused to let anyone touch the model. For those amateurs who were not familiar with the making of mannequins, they would only be impressed by the technical beauty of this model, but unfortunately, Chen Ge was a master of mannequin production. He was familiar with all the materials that were involved in the making of a mannequin.

There was no material in the world that could mimic human skin so perfectly... expect the person who was using human skin as his material. Compared to a factory-made mannequin, this model was more like a reproduction of a human female body. It had more than ten different parts. The head, the face, and the skin could be changed at will. The middle-aged man showcased the mannequin in the box, but he only allowed the tenants to see but not touch it. Other than the mannequin, there was nothing else inside the box, and as promised, the other tenants did not comment on the man’s private interest.

"Are you done now? Can I put her away now?" The middle-aged man was about to close the box when Big Head's voice suddenly came from the bathroom. "What is this?"

The group rushed out from the room. The middle-aged man slowly and evenly locked up the wooden box. The expression on his face was one of ease, like he had survived a big ordeal. The middle-aged man was the last to leave his bedroom. When he came to the living room, he realized everyone was looking at him. "What are you guys looking at me like that? What is going on?"

"That should be our question. How do you explain this?" Big Head opened his palm, and inside it sat a seriously worn-down tooth. "I found this inside your bathroom's underwater pipe."

"Impossible! Such thing couldn't exist in my house!" The middle-aged man stared at the tooth in Big Head's palm, and a very bad feeling started to bloom in his heart.

"This was discovered inside your bathroom. You'd better give us an excuse that we can believe," Big Head said in a soft tone, but combined with his strange voice, it was a chilling effect.

"I will repeat again! Such thing couldn't exist in my house!" The middle-aged man got into a stalemate with Big Head, neither willing to back off. Seeing the atmosphere chilled, Chen Ge walked over.

"Let's not jump to conclusions. Finding a tooth is no big deal. You are a fan of mannequins. Perhaps this tooth is meant for your mannequin."

"A mannequin's mouth does not need teeth," the middle-aged man explained to Chen Ge, the amateur.

"So, you tossed their tooth down the drain? Is that mannequin really just a mannequin?" Big Head used this opportunity to take another shot at the middle-aged man.

"What are you going on about this time?" The middle-aged man glared at Big Head. He tried his best to explain, but no one was willing to pay him any real attention.

"A single tooth is not enough to prove anything. We should all calm down for now." Chen Ge turned to Big Head with a question. "Did you find anything else other than this tooth?"

"Well, if a single tooth is not enough, what about a whole slew of teeth?" Big Head pointed at the drain in the bathroom.

"A whole slew of teeth?"

Everyone, including the middle-aged man, turned to look at the drain. The iron cover had been lifted open, and the spot where the drain curved had a few human teeth stuck in them. Some of them even had decayed flesh stuck to them.

"Why would these things be here?" The middle-aged man sensed the unfriendly gazes that were directed his way, and his forehead broke out in cold sweat. "I really have no idea why there are so many teeth in the drain. Perhaps some other people's things have gotten stuck in my drain while they were going down the pipe. You guys have to trust me!"

"The teeth were all found stuck in the U-bend. If they came from another house, they would have been washed away by the main pipe." Doctor Li's voice came from the other bedroom. His cold and icy eyes

stared right at the middle-aged man. "I suggest all of us stay away from this man. I have found something else."

Doctor Li raised a mannequin production direction manual in his hand. It was filled with the middle-aged man's writing on every page. He flipped through the book and took out a piece of paper with splotches of dried blood on it.

"Take a look at what is this." Xiao Sun and Qu Yin were the first to walk over. When they saw the content of the paper, their expressions both shifted.

"A letter of commitment?"

"I swear I will not..."

The whole paper was filled with blood. This proved that the person who wrote this letter was not in a good physical state when he penned this. He appeared to be heavily injured. The handwriting was very uneven, like the writer's fingers had been broken and snapped when he was forced to write this letter. Some of the content was too blurred out by the blood to be seen clearly. They could only see the beginning of the letter of the commitment and the signature of the landlord at the bottom.

"Why would you have a letter of commitment that is signed by the landlord? What did he promise you?"

"How would I know? This does not belong to me at all!" The middle-aged man by then realized what was up. Two people had just died in this building, and the culprit was on the loose. Evidence related to the crime had been found in his room; it was clear that someone was trying to frame him. A deep feeling of fear engulfed the man. He leaned against the wall. His pupils were shaking as he scanned everyone in the room. "That was purposely planted in my room! It is just like the teeth in the drain! They were the doing of the real killer! Someone is trying to frame me!"

"There are so many of us, but the killer chose to frame you? Why is that?" Doctor Li held the letter of commitment in both hands, just in case the middle-aged man darted forward to snatch it away from him.

"You have to believe me! These things really do not belong to me!" The middle-aged man was so desperate that his forehead was covered in sweat. Earlier, he had been desperate to hide his own secret that he did not imagine that someone would plant evidence to frame him.

"I suggest we apprehend him for now. This man is too dangerous." Big Head looked around. "The bed in the electrician's house can be used to secure his body, and there are electrical devices in his room. I believe they will be helpful in making the man speak the truth."

"What do the rest of you think?" Doctor Li turned to the other tenants. Chen Ge was stunned and did not speak like he was still caught in shock.

Xiao Sun shook his head. "How does that make us any different from the killer? I still think we can talk this out peacefully. Perhaps there is really a misunderstanding."

"I agree with Big Head's suggestion. The person who killed the landlord is in possession of all the room keys. We have to find out the keys' location, or else we would not be able to sleep peacefully at night!"

Qu Yin and his girlfriend did not care whether the middle-aged man was framed or not. They did not care about the torture and pain they would put the man through. They only cared about themselves.

“Me, Big Head, and the couple—the four of us have voted us. The majority wins, so that is what we shall do!” Doctor Li carefully put the letter of commitment away. He, Big Head, and Qu Yin slowly surrounded the middle-aged man. The latter knew that someone wanted him to die on the stake as the scapegoat.

“Listen to me! I am really not related to the landlord’s death! If you do not believe me, you can go and ask Wu You! The boy knows who the real killer is! He has seen people wandering outside the landlord’s room at midnight!” The middle-aged man was truly desperate. He knew how unhinged these tenants were. Once he was strapped to the bed, even if he was not the killer, he would be tortured until he died.

“Wu You has a habit of lying to get the adults’ attention. That is what you told us yourself. Why did you suddenly change your story? I realize that you are as big of a liar as that boy, but no worry, in a minute, we will get you to speak the truth.” Doctor Li took one step forward. He did not need the man to tell the truth; he only needed the middle-aged man to say the things that he wanted to hear. If the middle-aged refused to do so, he would be slowly tortured until he surrendered.

“Why are you pushing this on me?” The middle-aged man’s eyes wandered between Doctor Li and Big Head. “It was Big Head who found the teeth and you who found the letter of commitment...”

His eyes suddenly sharpened, and the middle-aged man shouted, “It is you two who are framing me! Big Head has been your patient since he was young. He listens to your every word! You two are the real killers of the landlord!”

The middle-aged man shouted from the core of his heart. He turned to Chen Ge and Wen Qing, who had not stated their stance. “You have to believe me! I am telling the truth! These two are the real murderers!”

At that moment, Chen Ge and Wen Qing were the middle-aged man’s only hope. He had forgotten not too long ago, he was the one who had been giving Chen Ge all sorts of problem.

“I personally want to believe you, but with so much damning evidence, I’d suggest you stop resisting.” Chen Ge raised his head. His words became the last straw that broke the middle-aged man. “Ever since Qu Gui was discovered, you have been affecting my train of thought. Can you tell me honestly why you have been trying to derail my thoughts?”

“Stop wasting time. We’d better apprehend him.” Doctor Li and Big Head pounced at the middle-aged man at the same time. The latter struggled literally for his life.

“You will all regret this! You will all be killed by the real murderer!” Being strapped to the bed equaled death. It was not safe inside the building anymore. After the man shook Big head and Doctor Li off, he did something that no one expected. He rushed to the living room window and whipped it open. Just as he prepared to jump, the shape of a jaw materialized from the black fog.

“Ah!” The middle-aged wailed for mercy. Fresh blood splashed on the windowsill. The mouth crunched and snapped his neck. The black fog pulsed, and moments later, the middle-aged man disappeared into the fog. The rest of the tenants were frozen inside the room.

“What was that?” Chen Ge had Yin Yang Vision, so he had the best sight, but even so, he failed to see the thing clearly. “Is there a man-eating monster inside the black fog?”

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An unknown monster hid inside the black fog, but probably due to the limitation of the rules behind the door, the fog did not spread into the apartment, so the tenants were relatively safe as long as they stayed inside the building. The space outside of the apartment appeared to be a completely different world in contrast to the safety of the space inside the apartment. Their entire lives were within the apartment, as if something bad would happen to them once they tried to leave the apartment. Doctor Li walked over to close the window like the tragedy that had just happened before their eyes was not registered in his mind. He did not appear to even notice the blood stains that still lingered on the windowsill.

“Only the landlord is free to leave the building. If any tenant wishes to leave at night, they have to be accompanied by the landlord.” Doctor Li looked at the thick black fog outside the window. “He must have been feeling extremely guilty to be desperate enough to break the rules and leave through the window.”

What Doctor Li said attracted Chen Ge’s attention. This place was far stranger and more dangerous than he had previously thought.

As Doctor Li had said, if one needed the landlord’s accompaniment to leave the building at night, then what would happen after the landlord died? What if the space was stuck in nighttime forever? What if this was just a recurring nightmare that would never welcome the first ray of dawn? After all, many worlds behind the door stopped at a specific moment in time because it was that period in time that caused the mark of despair within the door pusher.

“We have already confirmed the landlord’s murderer. Now we only need to focus our attention on capturing the killer who murdered Qu Gui, and then we can call it a day.” Doctor Li’s words were cold and calm, carrying an undercurrent of threat. He seemed to be treating the whole building as his hunting field. Now that a new hunter had entered his territory, it was his natural reaction to find this trespasser and then deal with them.

“I suggest we search this place further. If he is really the killer that killed the landlord, there must be other clues inside his house. For example, the spare keys that have been taken from the landlord’s home.” Qu Yin could not care less about the lives of other people. He only wanted the key to his own home. From his perspective, that was the only safe place within the whole building. If the spare key was not recovered, it meant that even his only sanctuary was not as safe as he thought. How would one expect him to sleep peacefully at night?

“Er...” Xiao Sun appeared to have something to say. He looked at the people around him before his eyes landed on the blood stain on the windowsill. “Are we being a bit too brash with our speculation? We determined the man as the murderer through a letter and some teeth, huh? Plus, I just feel that there is something not so right about this. I went into the bathroom before, and I also looked down the drain, but at the time...”

"We only wanted him to tell us the truth. It was the man who made his own choice. He had a guilty conscience, so he chose to run." Doctor Li glanced at Xiao Sun before his eyes quickly flitted away to address Chen Ge. "What do you think?"

Of everyone there, the only person that Doctor Li could not read was Chen Ge. He picked up an uncomfortable feeling from Chen Ge. It was like he had encountered a kindred spirit. He knew that Chen Ge was an extremely dangerous person. That thought had occurred to Doctor Li when he first laid eyes on Chen Ge.

"I agree with your opinion. The most important thing that we need to do now is focus on our capture of Qu Gui's murderer. All of us here have perfect alibis, so the murderer must be someone other than ourselves. If we start to question ourselves, it will only benefit the true murderer."

Everything was falling into place according to Chen Ge's plan. He was making use of these small group of tenants to go investigate the other tenants inside the apartment. When the latter's secret was at the threat of being exposed, they would naturally turn hostile against each other. When they were busy attacking each other, things would slowly turn for the better for Chen Ge. When the number of tenants lowered to a certain amount, Chen Ge would expose his own fangs.

Chen Ge held the same opinion as Doctor Li; they both believed that they would end up as the final victor. The difference between them was that Chen Ge knew that Qu Gui's killer was an outsider, but Doctor Li had no clue about anything that happened outside the building. One of them was constricted by the rules behind the door, and the other was setting up the trap using a combination of the knowledge from both inside and outside the door. This imbalance in information had already decided Doctor Li's defeat from the very beginning.

On the surface, everyone appeared to be peaceful and cooperative. But in reality, everyone was hiding a secret, with the only exception being Xiao Sun. This naïve and honest young man was still playing his detective game. He wanted to find the truth and was indeed trying his best to do so. He did not understand that truth could be found only when the sun was shining. When night fell and he was surrounded by crazed criminals, no one could care less about the truth. The thing that everyone focused on was how survive on their own.

The group failed to find the landlord's spare keys in his room. They turned his room upside down but came up with nothing. In the end, they had no choice but to give up. After leaving the middle-aged man's room, they searched every room one by one, starting from the third floor.

If the tenants refused to open the door, they would try their best to break the door down to gain entry. Many dirty corruptions were hidden inside the building. Years of darkness were spliced open by a sharp knife that was even darker. A cross-dressing maniac, extra marital affairs, crimes of passion, fugitives in hiding, a mental patient...

Every single door was home to many twisted souls. They guarded their dirtiest secrets with their lives. As Chen Ge's group pushed further, they slowly shed their human skin to reveal the monsters that they were. Chen Ge saw the bottom line of humanity in the world behind Xiang Nuan's door. These monsters were hiding among regular people. Perhaps he had even brushed past them every day on his way to school in the past.

As they moved from the third floor to the eighth floor, in the name of searching for the murderer, Chen Ge's group was met with great resistance. When their secrets were exposed, many of the twisted tenants resorted to the most extreme method to resist. Most of them did not care about the murders; they only wanted to safeguard their own secret. Doctor Li himself did not expect such resistance. During the process of investigation, Big Head was stabbed by one of the hiding fugitives, and the doctor himself suffered from light injuries.

A trapped beast was a dangerous beast. To prevent their human disguise from being peeled away, these tenants had used everything that they had at their disposal. Some used flowery words to trick and misdirect; others used brute force to chase them away; some wanted to lie to escape the investigation; some even wanted to kill everyone prevent so that their own secret would not be exposed.

Of the whole group, other than Wen Qing and Granny Lee who stayed at the back of the group, only Chen Ge remained uninjured. He stood to observe detachedly. His Yin Yang Vision was trained on the darker side of humanity being exposed. They soon arrived at the ninth floor, where the landlord's room was. They gathered at the door to Room 901 again. The murderer was not found, the spare keys that belonged to the landlord were still missing, and everyone looked worse for wear.

"When the front door is open, I swear to move away from this place." Xiao Sun's face was pale and devoid of color. His view of the world was inverted within one single night. The scary and gory scenes that he had encountered in the past hour were more intense and numerous than the gory scenes that he had seen from horror movies in the past twenty years of his life. The high intensity and high frequency trauma left a deep scar in him. He seemed to have gained a new type of phobia, the phobia of opening doors. He lacked the courage to open any more doors.

"If the keys are not found, the lock on the front door cannot be opened; none of us will be able to leave." Chen Ge held his backpack in one hand. He had been reserving his energy. He kept calling the names of his employees, and he did nothing beyond that.

"But we have already searched most of the rooms. There are so many keys. What could the killer that murdered the landlord have done with them?" Qu Yin and his girlfriend were given quite a fright as well. Compared to the other monsters that were exposed that night, they were only on the level of a beginner.

"We have been to most of the room, but there is a portion of the rooms in this building that we have not been to." It was about time to face the music. Chen Ge was in very good condition. After all, all he had done so far was follow along with everyone else.

"You mean the other rooms below the third floor?" Qu Yin nodded. He could only place his hope on the first and second floor.

"No, I mean our own rooms. The rooms of the people among us." When Chen Ge said that, Doctor Li and Big Head's expressions changed instantly. "The murderer knew that it would be dangerous to carry the evidence with them, so there is a high chance they would plant the evidence on each of us. For example, they might have placed some unimportant evidence inside our homes."

What Chen Ge described was exactly what Doctor Li and Big Head had done to the middle-aged man. Of the tenants inside the building, some were dead, others were injured, and the remaining ones were tied

up and detained. They had lost the power to resist. Chen Ge did not need to be afraid around them anymore.

Many criminals and monsters lived inside this building. If they ganged up, Chen Ge, whose physical condition was not at its best, would not be their match, but their own selfishness and darkness had provided Chen Ge with an opportunity. It allowed Chen Ge to find a 'path' that practically should not exist within the gap.

Doctor Li was lightly injured, Big Head was seriously injured, Auntie Ding was hiding in her own room, and Qu Yin was too selfish and shameless to help others, so the only real threat to Chen Ge at this moment was Doctor Li. Laying the cards on the table had become one of the best choices for Chen Ge. But he still had not torn down the walls between him and the tenants. After all, if he could stand and watch as the tenants bit into each other, why should he even lift a finger?

If a normal person entered a building such as this, the first thing they would consider was how to safeguard themselves and then look for the keys through various clues, escaping from the building as soon as possible. That was how most horror games on the market would have set up the plot. But Chen Ge's method was completely different. He wanted to kill all the monsters and creeps inside the building. Since everyone had lost the ability to resist, even if he did not escape from the building, in a way, he had gained victory.

"The few of us are not the murderers, but your suspicion is valid. We should check each of our homes to be sure. If we find anything in our houses, we should share them with the rest." Doctor Li's eyes were still sharp, but fatigue had started to appear on his face. The water at this building ran too deep. Many of the tenants even managed to surprise him with the depravity of their secrets. "The killer is very cunning, and they might do what you suggested. We must be careful not to fall for it and remember to have trust in each other no matter what."

Doctor Li and Big Head knew full well that even though they had killed the landlord, they were not responsible for Qu Gui's death. There was a real unknown murderer that was lurking inside the building. That was why they had chosen to cooperate with Chen Ge's investigation. They had killed the landlord and were in possession of all the spare keys, but the murderer could enter other people's rooms freely through the window. This was a very big hidden threat to them. What if the secret in their own rooms was found out by this mysterious third party?

To protect their darkest side, humans would do many things, and Chen Ge made use of this psychology to slowly edge this group of crazy people into the darkness of the abyss.

"We should check the ninth and tenth floor first. If we fail to find anything here, we shall start by investigating our own homes, we have to take care of our own safety." Chen Ge's initial plan was to borrow the tenants' power to deal with the monster from the cursed hospital, but he did not expect the monster to be so clever. They did not present him with a chance at all. By then, almost all the tenants had been incapacitated already, but the monster from the cursed hospital still had not shown itself. Without the key, Chen Ge's group had to use a lot of energy to break down the doors.

After a long effort, they finally got all the rooms on the ninth floor to open. The six rooms on the ninth floor had the same interior design and furniture placement. From appearance alone, it appeared like the same room had been copied six different times.

“Why would the landlord have six completely identical rooms made on this floor?”

“The appearance might be the same, but the inside might not be.” Chen Ge’s memory was very good. He remembered the details in Room 901. After some comparison, he noticed many problems. “One of the rooms had a mirror in the bathroom that could be removed, and there is a hidden compartment behind it. The other had the wall behind the fridge hollowed out. Some had a hidden space under the bed. It was large enough to hide a person.”

“But why would the landlord do something like that? He is the only occupant of the rooms on the ninth floor, isn’t he? Why would he do these adjustments to all of the six rooms?” Xiao Sun still had not realized the scary details in the observation that Chen Ge proffered.

“Perhaps it was to observe someone and slowly torture them to the edge of madness.”

“How do you come to that conclusion?”

“Have you guys noticed that all of the windows in all the rooms on the ninth floor are sealed up by cement? The whole room is an isolated space, and there is no way to escape other than through the front door.” Chen Ge stood next to the window. “This makes these rooms perfect prisons. Assuming you stayed in one of the rooms here, after you were knocked out and transported to another similar looking room, would you even realize that you’d been moved?”

“But why would someone do something like that?”

Chen Ge pointed at the bed and the mirror in the bedroom that had been tempered with. “Imagine a person woke up in the middle of the night. He went to the toilet, and when he walked past the mirror, he realized that the reflection that looked at him was not his. Would he be afraid?”

“The culprit wanted to force his prisoner to go mad?”

“It goes far deeper than that. Have you noticed there are unlabeled medicine bottles littered all over the six rooms?” Chen Ge initially did not want to waste too much time on the landlord since he was already dead, but he was surprised that the landlord himself was hiding such a big secret.

“These bottles are the clues?” Xiao Sun picked up one of the bottles and opened it to look.

“If the imprisoned person took the drug and went to sleep, when he woke up and realized that everything had returned to normal, wouldn’t he be given the impression that he was mentally ill? Wouldn’t that increase his reliance on these drugs?”

At this point, Chen Ge turned to look at the coffee table and the dining table.

“Basically, all six rooms had these unlabeled bottles placed everywhere. This is a kind of powerful mental suggestion, and the purpose is for the prisoner to get hooked on them. The person might initially suspect the use of these drugs, but as the situation around him became stranger and stranger, he would slowly accept the fact that the drugs were useful for his condition. And the cruelest thing was that these drugs were not helping him at all. If anything, they were the source of his problem. They were the reason he was slowly spiraling down a rabbit hole of madness.”

Chen Ge went and collected a large number of unlabeled medicine bottles from all six rooms. None of them were named. “Doctor Li, can you identify them? Are they all the same kind of drug?”

"Some appear to be common sleeping pills, but I can't identify the others. They should be used for mental illness treatment. I cannot be sure."

"Only you can help us identify these drugs, but since even you can't be sure, this clue is not that important to us." Chen Ge was about to put the bottles away when Wen Qing, who had not said a word, poked him on his back. Chen Ge definitely noticed that, so he said, "There should be other clues hidden in these six rooms. Why don't we split up to look for them? If there's nothing else, we will meet up at the tenth floor."

After everyone filed away, Wen Qing finally spoke. "Chen Ge, these are drugs for manic psychosis. I have bought them many times for Xiang Nuan. Before the landlord moved away from Jin Hwa Apartments, he had a lot of similar drugs at his place as well."

"Wait a minute, so these drugs belong to the landlord?"

"Yes."

When he first saw the drugs, Chen Ge had come up with two speculations. First, the drugs belonged to Doctor Li. After all, he was a doctor, and he was related to the landlord's death. But the timeline did not match up. One would need a lot of planning to build six near-identical rooms on the same floor. The second speculation was that the drugs belonged to the landlord, and the b*stard who had been imprisoning others was the landlord himself. He was the one who built the six mirroring rooms, and the intention was to push a person mad.

"In your mind, what kind of person is the landlord?"

"The landlord is the old CEO for Jin Hwa Company. He was an unlucky old man. His whole family died in a fire, and after that, it was like something switched off in him. However, he would brighten up around children, and he was one of the few people who did not hate Xiang Nuan."

"So, you have a good impression of him."

"When I was very busy, he would offer to help me look after Xiang Nuan."

"You had a person with a clinical manic disorder look after your son?" Even Chen Ge was surprised by that revelation.

"The drugs were for the landlord's son. His youngest son suffered from this illness. He was not able to shake it off. His illness came and went, and he's been using this drug since as far back as I can remember."

"Do you believe everything the man tells you? The chance of inheritance for mental illness is as high as twelve to fifteen percent within family members. That is a number far higher than a normal person." Chen Ge really did learn a lot from his time with Doctor Gao. Through the psychiatrist, he had learned many things related to psychology.

"But the old man has always been kind. He is friendly with everyone. Everyone who knows him respects him sincerely."

"You can still believe something like that after what we have been through tonight? The kinder they are on the surface, the darker the secret they are hiding." Chen Ge suddenly became urgent with his words. "Did you let him look after Xiang Nuan often?"

"Not really that often. It only happened once or twice." Color drained from Wen Qing's face. Suddenly, a very horrible realization dawned on her. "Chen Ge, are you trying to say that these six similar rooms were specifically built to imprison Xiang Nuan?"

"I cannot tell for sure, but there is one thing that I have understood." Chen Ge stood at the corner and lowered his voice. "The world behind the door is built according to the memory of the door pusher. When I first got here, I was confused. How did Xiang Nuan manage to learn the secrets of all these tenants? Initially, I thought it was because Xiang Nuan had the exceptional ability to see through one's disguise and into a person's heart. But now, after hearing what you've said, I know the truth is much crueler than I predicted."

"The truth?"

"Do you remember the television set in the bathroom and the convoluted wiring behind it?"

"I do." Wen Qing had a very bad feeling about this.

"The landlord had been spying on the tenants' lives with it. He saw the ugliest and darkest side of humanity, and he could have shared that experience with Xiang Nuan, who was as pure as a sheet of white paper. Before everyone else, he told him how beautiful the world was, how bright the flowers were, and how blue the sky was, but behind closed doors, he kept feeding Xiang Nuan this information. The things shown on the television are the real appearance of the world that he lives in."

Chen Ge voiced his own speculation. He tried to make it sound as comforting as he could, but it still almost caused Wen Qing to faint. She had not dared imagine that Xiang Nuan was in the state that he was now due to her own negligence and trust in the landlord.

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Patting Wen Qing lightly on her shoulder, Chen Ge whispered softly, "Pull yourself together. Now is not yet the time for regret and sadness."

It took Wen Qing a long time before she slowly returned to normal. She took a few deep breaths and gave Chen Ge some affirmative nods.

"After this, we will go to the tenth floor. I believe then we will find out what the landlord's real secret is. After everything is revealed, it will be about time we leave this building."

Xiang Nuan and the monster from the cursed hospital had all disappeared. Chen Ge did not wish to stay there for too long. He was worried that he might miss out on some things. Ten minutes later, the group met at the entrance to the stairwell that connected the ninth and tenth floors. They had searched through all six rooms but come up with nothing.

"The last secret of this apartment should be hidden on the tenth floor. We should be ready. Who knows what we'll face?"

When Chen Ge said that, his eyes scanned over Doctor Li and Big Head. Doctor Li and Big Head carried black, opaque bags that contained lock-picking items. The two of them stood close together. Their eyes darted about, and they did not dare look Chen Ge in the eye. They seemed to have formulated a plan of their own behind Chen Ge's back.

Are they finally going to make their move?

As if he did not notice anything, Chen Ge's tone and expression did not change much. However, he no longer walked at the front of the group and made sure that Doctor Li and Big Head always stayed in his sight. He walked together with Xiao Sun and Wen Qing. As they went up the stairs, Chen Ge even purposely held back Qu Yin to ask him some unimportant questions.

During the temporarily break, these few tenants were supposed to search different rooms on the ninth floor, but when they returned, Doctor Li and Big Head returned alongside Qu Yin and his wife. These four's patience toward Chen Ge appeared to have reached its limit. When they came to the tenth floor, the group did not take that long to pry open the door to Room 1006. They had gotten quite good at this after repeating it so many times that night. After the front door fell open, a light scent of decay floated out from inside the room. It smelled like something had been out in the open for too long and had gotten spoilt.

"Normally, only the landlord will come to this floor. The tenth floor is not open for tenants." Qu Yin held his nose. For Chen Ge, this was no smellier than the other scents in the apartment. The tenants, though, found the smell revolting. Strangely enough, the tenants did not seem to be able to smell the actual stench that Chen Ge found revolting.

The furnishing of Room 1006 was at the bare minimum. The floor was filled with puddles of water and dirty stains. Following that trail of the stench, the group entered the room. They noticed that other than a ton of big freezers, there was basically nothing else inside Room 1006.

"There won't be a dead body kept inside a freezer, will there?" Wen Qing tried to hide behind Chen Ge but was pulled out to stand before him.

"Do not wander away from my sight. Even though dead bodies are scary, at least you know for sure that they pose no threat to you. I cannot say the same for the others in our company." Chen Ge walked to open a random freezer. It was filled to the brim with rotten vegetables and meat and a big bucket of ice. "Why did the landlord need to prepare so many food items?"

The group split up to open the rest of the freezers. There was nothing scary. The first few freezers were all stocked with food. The last freezer had various rotten meat and produce littered around it.

Inside the freezer were several bags of medicine. Chen Ge took one of the bags out from the freezer. He opened one of them, took out a bottle, and studied it closer.

"This kind of drugs will spoil easily after being exposed to the freezing agent inside the freezer. The medicinal effect will be greatly affected. The landlord possesses a lot of these medicine bottles, so it means that he knew this medicine very well. He would not have made the rookie mistake of using the freezer to store them. Other than that, take a look at the meat that's littered around this freezer. The person who did this probably just wanted to find a space to deposit these extra drugs."

"After the landlord died, it must be the killer who possesses the keys. Do you mean that the killer has been to this place already?" Doctor Li carried a black, opaque bag and sidled up to Chen Ge.

"I did not say that." Chen Ge gave Doctor Li a side glance. "By the way, you have such a lucrative career, and compared to the rest of the society, a doctor's income should be quite high. why would you stay in a place like this?"

"I have gotten used to living here," Doctor Li replied lightly.

"What is it that you have gotten used to? The dirtiness, the horrid nature of the building, or the lack of management around this place?"

"I have gotten used to the air here. I feel comfortable living here, and I am too lazy to find a new place to move to." Doctor Li closed the freezer. "Come on, let's go to the next room to take a look."

He held the black bag away from Chen Ge but purposely walked past the latter. Chen Ge carried his backpack, but his eyes did not stay on Doctor Li. Instead, he tilted his head to study Qu Yin, who looked surprisingly nervous.

"And what are you looking at?"

"Nothing." Qu Yin held his hand over his stomach. He then followed Doctor Li and Big Head out of the room.

Xiao Sun was about to follow them, but he was given a tug by Chen Ge. "I want to ask you a question."

"Go ahead." Xiao Sun was still analyzing who the killer was. His brows were creased in deep contemplation.

"When the electrician was killed, did you hear something that he said before he died?"

"I did not hear much, but I have a feeling the electrician seemed to know Auntie Ding and Doctor Ding. They appeared to share a relationship that is deeper than mere neighbors." Xiao Sun was honestly quite an observant young man, but unfortunately, his way of thinking was too narrow.

"They had a close relationship, but Auntie Ding and Doctor Li insisted on killing him. Why do you think that's the case?"

"Because they wanted to silence him?"

"Indeed. The electrician is a crazy man that likes to torture those weaker than him, Auntie Ding is a human trafficker that is mentally ill, but the biggest problem here is Doctor Li because he is the one who is the mastermind behind everything." Chen Ge suddenly revealed all the information. It required some time for the poor young man to digest.

"When did you find out about all this, and why did you only tell me about them now? What is it that you are up to?" He had been following the real killers to search for the killer. They had gone through the entire building. Just the thought of it caused Xiao Sun to shiver. Now he truly had trust issues. He was not going to trust anyone anymore.

“Everyone has their own secret, and you are no exception, but some people’s secrets will not harm others, while other people’s secrets are built on the basis of harming other people.” Chen Ge patted Xiao Sun lightly on his shoulder. “Humanity is the most complicated concept in the world. As an individual with your own unique ability to think and freedom to choose, I am not going to force you into making any decision, but I hope that you will sincerely consider what you should do next.”

Xiao Sun’s appearance behind Xiang Nuan’s world behind the door proved that there was something wrong with the young man, but he was not assimilated by the darkness of the world. The darkness did not corrupt him. It was probably due to his incorruptibility that he had mysteriously disappeared outside the door. Chen Ge believed that Xiao Sun was someone that he could have on his side, so along the way, he had been observing Xiao Sun. It was difficult to gain Chen Ge’s confidence behind the door because Chen Ge was someone who had difficulty trusting others in nature, but there was something good about him, and that was once he had truly placed his trust in someone, the trust would not be so easily shaken.

“No matter what happens next, the thing that you need to do is make sure that you protect yourself and try not to say things that will make yourself a target anymore.”

Before this, Xiao Sun was just a stranger to Chen Ge. The latter did not mind whether Xiao Sun lived or died. At most, he would only come to his rescue verbally if needed. But now that Chen Ge wanted Xiao Sun as a partner, he naturally needed to warn Xiao Sun from ‘running his mouth’ and getting himself into trouble. After hearing what Chen Ge had to say, Xiao Sun nodded subconsciously even though he still looked as befuddled as ever.

Suddenly, Big Head’s scream came from the corridor. Chen Ge walked out from Room 1006 and saw Big Head sitting in the corridor. He had his hands covering his stomach, and blood was leaking out through his bandage. Big Head’s injury was deteriorating. Doctor Li had suggested that he go back to his room to rest, but Big Head had refused to leave Doctor Li’s side as if he knew what was about to happen. He wanted to stay to help Doctor Li as much as he could.

Soon, the other rooms on the tenth floor were all pushed open. They did not find anything useful from Room 1006 to Room 1002. They walked all the way to Room 1001, the room that was at the end of the corridor on the top floor of this apartment building. Before the front door was even completely open, Chen Ge’s group heard a voice coming from inside the room. It sounded like a boy was crying.

“Is there someone inside the room?”

Chen Ge did not mind the crying that much. Anything could have happened behind the door. But once he noticed the shock on Doctor Li’s face, he slowly became suspicious of this development. Doctor Li, who was the landlord’s real killer, did not expect the crying to come from the room. This meant that something had changed since the last time he was there. They pushed the front door completely open, and the group saw what was inside the room. Their expressions all shifted.

The floor and walls of Room 1001 were painted with open eyes. There was no furniture in the living room. Instead, there were several television sets of varying sizes. The television sets were stacked on top of each other. The screen of the set right in the middle was on. The image was that of a boy sitting in front of more than ten televisions. His face was pale, and his pupils shook as he looked at the images on-screen with clear anxiety on his face.

“Xiang Nuan!” When she saw the boy on the screen, Wen Qing was unable to control herself and shouted out the boy’s name. Her own child had been exposed to such a nightmarish experience. Wen Qing stood at the door, and her eyes reddened immediately. Her shoulders were shaking from guilt and remorse. She did not dare look at the television, but she could not stop her eyes from wandering toward the screen. The boy on the screen was struggling within himself. Sometimes, the expression on his face was normal, but sometimes, it was turned into a horrible grimace, like a monster.

The keys had already been taken away by the killer, but the expression on Doctor Li’s face was one of surprise. Obviously, he had no idea who had switched the television on. Naturally, that still did not clear him of the suspicion. It merely meant that the person who switched on the television could freely enter this room without the need of the landlord’s key. Instantly, Xiang Nuan’s image appeared in Chen Ge’s mind.

The door pusher is Xiang Nuan. This is his world. Is he leading us to see the truth?

The group froze at the front door. Just as they were considering whether to walk into the room, Xiang Nuan inside the screen suddenly lifted his head. It was as if the boy was looking at those gathered at the door through the television screen.

“Leave...” A very soft voice called out from inside the television. Then, all the screens of the rest of the televisions were switched on at once. The images started to play.

The middle-aged man in Room 302 caressed a fresh dead body beside him as he worked on the joint of his beloved mannequin.

A fifty-year-old man in Room 205 slammed Granny Lee’s black and white photo onto the ground. He grabbed the sacrificial food on the altar and threw it at Granny Lee, and then he lunged at Granny Lee to strangle her.

The man in Room 701 used the burning end of a cigarette to sear away his fingerprints. He stood next to the mirror while waving a knife. The picture of his warrant was plastered on the mirror.

The young woman in Room 702 sat before the computer. She was bathed in blood. Behind her lay the dead body of a middle-aged man. She appeared to be searching the internet for information on how to deal with large trash.

In Room 505, a man put on makeup and then dressed himself up in his wife’s clothes. He held up his wife’s picture and struck the same pose as his wife, who was captured in time.

In the kitchen of Room 602, a man washed his hands again and again. He used various tools and rubbed until the skin of his hands were bleeding. The water was running red, but he still could not stop himself from scrubbing his hands.

In Room 301, Wu You had his eyes and ears covered by an adult whose face could not be seen. His parents, who lay in a pool of blood, were dragged out of the living room by the other tenants of the building.

...

Reels of uncomfortable videos played on the screens. Xiang Nuan was surrounded in the middle. His expression became more and more unhinged. He waved his hands wildly about before he collapsed to the ground and shoveled the pills that were on the ground into his mouth. After some time, all the screens started to flicker. As Xiang Nuan's body collapsed with a thud to the ground, all the images disappeared at the same time.

The room sank into silence; the only sound that remained was Wen Qing's remorseful sobbing that echoed around the room. The images on the screen were very real, and because they were real, they were scary.

"So, is that the final truth behind this building?" Xiao Sun felt like he was about to go crazy soon.

"You're wrong. That is only just a part of the truth." Chen Ge turned to Doctor Li. "Why didn't the videos relating to you, Big Head, Auntie Ding, and the electrician show up earlier?"

"What's so strange about that? Doesn't that prove that we are normal, innocent people?" Big Head countered to defend himself.

"Stop lying to yourself. You know full well what the electrician has done. The real reason you killed him was to protect yourself." Chen Ge pulled out the zipper of his backpack. "It was the four of you who ganged up together to kill the landlord."

The atmosphere in Room 1001 froze. After a long time, Doctor Li's cold face suddenly surfaced with a thrilling smile. "You're not wrong. The landlord saw our secret, so he had to die. He was killed by the four of us. Those teeth and the letter were our things, and we planted them on the man. You are very clever, but it is too late now. You will not find any allies in this building anymore."

Seeing the scary smile on Doctor Li's face, Chen Ge also responded with a smile. However, his smile was like a blazing sun; it was radiating with warmth. Yet, in the circumstance, his smile appeared even more absurd and out of place. "Do you know why I only understood it now?"

After hearing what Chen Ge had to say, both Big Head and Doctor Li laughed. The two of them waved at Qu Yin. The three of them surrounded Chen Ge from all sides.

"Actually, I have been lying from the beginning. I am no pediatrician, and Big Head is not my patient." Doctor Li pulled back his sleeves to reveal the horrifying needle holes and scars that ran up his arms. "We are both mental patients, serious mental cases who are unable to control ourselves."

They searched inside the black bag. The bags not only contained lock-picking tools but also two sharp knives.

"When we were coming up the stairs, I wanted to take this out several times, but I reined myself in every time," Doctor Li said as he brandished the knife. In his eyes, Chen Ge probably did not even qualify as a human. The doctor looked at Chen Ge like a butcher would look at a cow waiting to be slaughtered. "I always felt this place was too noisy and crowded. Finally, it has quieted down, and I can officially take over as the new landlord."

"That sure is a beautiful dream you have." Chen Ge also reached his hand into his backpack. "Actually, two can play at this game. I am no psychiatrist. In fact, the patients that I have treated refer to me as Doctor Skull Cracker."

His fingers clamped around the handle that was shaped like a human spine. When Chen Ge said that last word, he lunged forward. He swung the hammer heavily on Qu Yin's body.

Qu Yin crumbled to the ground as he coughed out mouthfuls of blood. His expression was frozen in disbelief.

His mind was still processing the development, but before he could even say a word, his chest had already caved in.

"Why me?" His body lost its mobility. Qu Yin looked like he was not long for this world.

"One left, two to go." Chen Ge stood at the door. The sharp edges of the hammer ground against the wall, creating a harrowing sound.

Chapter 1087 Does It Not Look Like a Black Sea? 2 in 1

Chen Ge moved too fast for them to handle. Initially, the three predators had surrounded him, and they had still been threatening him, but the next moment, one of them had collapsed to the ground already. In the blink of an eye, the three hunters had dwindled to two, and the remaining two were injured to various degrees. Doctor Li and Big Head were originally standing on both sides, trying to corner Chen Ge. But after they saw Qu Yin collapse, they moved subconsciously closer to one another. Two were still better than one supposedly.

Holding the sharp knives, the twisted expressions on their faces froze. Their eye wandered between their knives and Chen Ge's hammer. In terms of professionalism, the man before them was like a madman that had no cure anymore, and the two of them were at most people with some mental illness. They were all not right in the head, but there was a difference in essence. Even in movies, one would rarely encounter a character who would carry this kind of horrible-looking hammer at all times.

"I am sure you two are tired from all the running in one night already. It is time for you to take your well-deserved rest; try not to do any immoral things in your next life."

Chen Ge dragged the hammer as he walked toward Doctor Li and Big Head. The duo's eyes twitched. Looking at the heavy blood stains on the head of the hammer, their faces could not have been paler. Chen Ge stood strategically at the door to block any possible escape. Both Big Head and Doctor Li knew that Chen Ge would not have allowed them the chance to escape anyway, so the only chance they had at survival was fighting back as much as they could.

All along, they had thought they had the upper hand, but only then did they realize that it was not Chen Ge who was being led step by step into a trap; it was them.

Narrowing his eyes, Chen Ge did not waste any time and charged forward with Doctor Skull Cracker's Hammer at Doctor Li.

Big Head's stomach was injured, so he would not be able to run. Even if he chose to escape on his own, Chen Ge was confident that he would be able to catch up to an injured man. Therefore, Chen Ge's target was clear from the beginning. He had his eyes locked on Doctor Li.

Doctor Li, who had a crazy grimace and unhinged personality, gripped the knife in his hand. He had never encountered this situation before. Normally, he was the one in Chen Ge's position. He was the one hunting others.

Bang!

Doctor Li tried his best to put up a fight, but the tip of the knife barely had the chance to graze Chen Ge. Chen Ge was masterful at using the one-meter-long hammer. After all, he had gotten a lot of practice.

With Doctor Li and Big Head collapsing, Chen Ge turned his attention to Qu Yin's girlfriend. He was not going to let any possible threats fester in his presence. He tied the few immobilized individuals with the electric wires that could be found in the room. When he was fine, he finally gave a sigh of relief.

Dragging the hammer with one hand, Chen Ge's chest rose and fell unevenly.

My physique has deteriorated greatly. Even though I have been saving my energy since I entered the door, I am already in such tired state after swinging the hammer a few times.

Chen Ge walked past the unconscious Doctor Li and Big Head and turned toward Xiao Sun and Wen Qing, who were stunned beyond words.

"All that I said earlier was merely to trick them. Facing such crazed murderers, I was afraid for my own safety too. But I know that when facing these people, you need to act tougher and more vicious than them to gain the upper hand."

Dragging the hammer that was had pieces of clothing and blood stains stuck to it, Chen Ge's expression was very natural like what he had just done was as simple as a walk through the park.

"I understand what you mean, but how do you explain the weapon that you have been hiding from us? Have you been keeping it inside your backpack all this time?" Xiao Sun's voice was shaking. He felt like he had just been taken out of some dangerous situation to be put into another. It was like the night would never end.

"You mean this hammer?" Chen Ge used the murder's clothes to wipe away the blood stain. "Even though it looks scary, it is actually just a prop at a haunted house."

"A prop at a haunted house? Do you think we will believe something like that? What kind of haunted house would use such a dangerous weapon as a prop?"

"The haunted house at Western Jiujiang's New Century Park." Chen Ge carefully wiped away the blood on Doctor Skull Cracker's hammer. He then walked toward Wen Qing. It did not matter that much whether Xiao Sun trusted him or not; the key was Wen Qing. "I have already told you about this before."

"You did, but I can't say that it's what I expected." Wen Qing's eyes were bulging. She had always had the impression that Chen Ge was a cultured man; he should be someone in the art industry or someone who earned his living using his brains. It was not until she heard Qu Yin's bones cracking that she realized how wrong she was. From the minute Chen Ge took out Doctor Skull Cracker's hammer to the moment the four tenants collapsed in the room, it took less than a minute. This happened so fast that Wen Qing still had not found enough time to process what kind emotion or expression she should be using when facing Chen Ge.

“Reality and imagination will always have that degree of difference. There is no need to mind these details. You only need to know that I will not harm you, and I wish to bring Xiang Nuan back to real life with you.” Chen Ge blinded Wen Qing with a consoling smile. There was a unique presence about the man that allowed him to give off this presence of closeness to those around them. He would easily bring them into his confidence if he wanted to.

“You followed me into the door; it was me who dragged you in this mess. Honestly, I was quite scared and shocked by what you did, but don’t worry, I have complete faith in you. After all, without you, I probably would have been butchered by this gang of people a long time ago, much less have the opportunity to go look for Xiang Nuan.”

After Wen Qing calmed down, she came to the realization that Chen Ge was the only trustworthy person in this world behind the door.

“What is the situation between you two? I can see that you two are not siblings as you claimed earlier. Are you pursuing her? Are you his boyfriend?” Xiao Sun’s eyes wandered between Wen Qing and Chen Ge. After hearing what he had to say, Wen Qing quickly tried to explain it, but Chen Ge turned to look back at his shadow. He stared at it for as long as a minute, and then he took out Zhang Ya’s diary. There was nothing new added to it.

“So, was I right? You two aren’t brother and sister but a couple?” Xiao Sun felt like he had hit the nail on the head again.

“Do you wish to tempt fate every time?” Chen Ge placed the diary back into the backpack’s inner compartment. He realized that there might be a reason behind Xiao Sun’s mysterious disappearance in real life. “From this moment onward, you’d better watch the words that come out from your mouth. The few of us are the only remaining members left of this group. If you attract danger that is beyond my capability to handle, then I will have to abandon you to deal with it yourself.”

While holding Doctor Skull Cracker’s Hammer, Chen Ge had a heart to heart talk with Xiao Sun. From then, he found out about Xiao Sun’s secret. The main reason this university student moved into Jin Hwa Residence was due to poverty. He was taken advantage of by the landlord. The landlord rented him the house for a very low price; the young man thought that he had scored a bargain, but from the very beginning, the landlord had treated him as nothing more than a target. The rent that he had given was not money but his own life. Xiao Sun’s story inspired Chen Ge’s greatly. An idea appeared in his mind. If he managed to survive this final door, he could set up the scenario in his haunted house so that the visitors would live the life of Xiao Sun and see how long they could survive.

After leaving Room 1001, Chen Ge turned to look at the television sets placed in the living room. He thought back to Xiang Nuan, who had shown up on the screen. The boy seemed to have said something to the group who had gathered at the door before they came in—‘Leave.’

“That was probably meant for Wen Qing.” Closing the front door behind them, Chen Ge took the keys that he had found from Doctor Li and Big Head and led Wen Qing, Xiao Sun, and Granny Lee downstairs. The corridors were awash with blood. The doors had been pried open by force. None of these doors were the one that Chen Ge was looking for, but each of them was hiding their own version of despair and ugliness. When a person was pushed to the edge of the abyss, with a slight blow of the wind, they might take the path of no return.

And the thing that pushed them over the edge could be an inconspicuous detail in their life, it could be a word from a random stranger, or it could have originated from their own memory. Chen Ge used the key to open the door to Doctor Li's house. Inside it, they found many human bone specimens, the ring of keys left behind by the landlord, and a few bottles of unknown medicine. "Finally, we will be able to leave this place."

Before they left, Chen Ge took a detour to head to Auntie Ding's room. He delivered her the same judgement as Big Head and Doctor Li. At the same time, he rescued the child that was trapped in her home. Under Auntie Ding's torture, the boy's cognitive ability was severely impaired. When asked, he could only answer that his name was Jia Fu.

Chen Ge found a family picture on the boy, and the picture painted a scenario that caused Chen Ge's hair to stand on end. The brightly smiling Auntie Ding and Jia Fu stood in the middle of the family photo. Next to them was a row of wooden boxes, and the wooden boxes had pictures attached to them with children's name—Jia Le, Jia An, Jia Mei...

Jia Fu's legs had been amputated, so he could not leave with Chen Ge. In terms of how to deal with Jia Fu, Wen Qing and Xiao Sun had a split of opinion. Xiao Sun wanted to carry Jia Fu and leave while Wen Qing felt they should go and find Xiang Nuan first before they come back to get Jia Fu. After all, Jia Fu could not move on his own, and he would only burden them.

In the end, it was Chen Ge who made the final decision. He decided to take Jia Ming to Uncle Huang's place at the first floor. As they moved down the stairs, Chen Ge stopped at the third floor. He decided to go to Room 301 to take a look. The boy known as Wu You was sitting in the living room, looking with interest at the paintings that were stuck to the window.

"Wu You, why don't you come with us? I will bring you to go and find your parents." There were not many good people in the apartment. The fact that Wu You could survive for so long was a miracle in and of itself. Even Chen Ge was surprised by this. Therefore, he wanted to bring Wu You with them; that way, at least they would have an extra pair of eyes.

"I will not go with any of you." To Chen Ge's surprise, Wu You denied him outright.

"Why? Haven't you been meaning to see your mother and father?" Chen Ge was curious. The reason that he used to convince the boy to follow him was to bring him to find his parents; he did not think that the boy would reject him so easily and firmly without giving it much thought.

"On the day my parents left, the last thing that they told me was, no matter what, I am not to leave this house. They will soon return. Whenever a person comes to get me with the offer that they will take me to my parents, that person has to be lying to me." Wu You lifted his head. "You are lying to me, right?"

Chen Ge was stumped. From Wu You's words, he discerned a deeper layer of meaning. When Wu You's parents were dragged out of their house, they probably knew that they would die. That was the only reason they would say something like that. After all, no one would be able to help Wu You find them anymore, so anyone who came to claim so had to be a liar. That was solid logic.

"There's plenty of food on the tenth floor, and this apartment is now a lot safer. If you run into any trouble, go and find the old man that lives on the first floor." Chen Ge ruffled Wu You's head. This boy

was clever beyond his years. "Your parents are not wrong. They will return. Before they do, you have to take good care of yourself."

Chen Ge turned to leave. Just as he was about to reach the second floor, Wu You's voice came from above them. "Hey!"

"What?"

"I want to tell you something." Wu You was leaning against the door. His eyes were locked on Wen Qing. "Xiang Nuan is lost. He also appears to be waiting for his family to come find him."

"What?"

The door of Room 301 that had never closed was shut by Wu You, and the corridor sank into silence.

"Does the boy know something that he has not told us?" Wen Qing was quite agitated.

"Perhaps he is friends with Xiang Nuan." Xiao Sun, who was carrying Jia Fu, started to go into detective mode as per his habit.

"Give me a moment while I go and deal with this." Chen Ge carried his backpack and returned to the third floor.

"What are you planning to do?"

"I will just ask him in person! Why is a boy of six or seven years old playing guess that question with me? I hate people who finish half of their stories the most in this world."

"He is just a child!"

Wu You was surprised to see Chen Ge again within ten seconds since their last meeting. After some repeated questioning, Chen Ge finally got the information he wanted. The electrician was the first to discover the landlord's secret. The reason behind that was because Xiang Nuan had stuffed a video tape that he stole from the landlord's home into his pigeonhole. Xiang Nuan left the building that night. But before he left, Wu You chanced a glance at Xiang Nuan taking a trip to the rooftop.

After giving thanks to Xiang Nuan, Chen Ge carried the backpack and called after Wen Qing. The two of them rushed to the rooftop. "This is it."

The iron door on the tenth floor that led to the rooftop was locked. Chen Ge took some time looking through the ring of keys before he managed to locate the correct one.

"Stay far away from me. Once the door is open, the black fog from outside might rush in, and there are monsters hiding in that black fog."

After Wen Qing stepped back, Chen Ge pushed open the iron door ever so slightly. The black fog outside was not as thick as he imagined, but the stench was as horrible as he remembered. Taking out the hammer, Chen Ge slowly pushed the iron door open. When he saw the whole world that opened before him, his eyes slowly widened.

Jin Hwa Apartment Block A was the tallest building in this neighborhood. So, standing on the rooftop, he could see the entire residential area. The black fog that stretched all the way to the horizon enveloped

the twisted buildings. This was like a sea of blackness, and Jin Hwa Apartment and Jiu Hong Apartment were like lone islands that were abandoned in the middle of this black sea. Giant shadows slithered through the fog. Chen Ge gulped. His hands that gripped the hammer were slick with sweat.

“So, this is the real world behind Xiang Nuan’s door.”

Xiang Nuan’s door was completely different from any of the doors that Chen Ge had been to before. It was not covered in red mist but this black fog. Using his Yin Yang Vision, Chen Ge could capture the flickering shadows that moved in the darkness. He was suddenly reminded of what happened when he conducted the nightmare mission at Jiang Yuan Apartments. When he reached on the rooftop blindfolded, he heard his own voice from twenty years ago. When he was about to be killed by the door, the younger version of Chen Ge said, “If I am really forgotten in my nightmare one day, I will paint a window on that black sea and open all the doors in the red city so that all the eyes that have gotten used to the darkness will get a chance to see the light.”

“I know what the red city is. Could the black sea refer to this endless wave of black fog?”

Looking at the dark sky, compared to the giant shadow in the fog, Chen Ge felt so miniscule. “When Xiang Nuan left, he came to the rooftop. If I assume that Wu You is not purposely trying to trick me, there should be clues left behind by Xiang Nuan here.”

Chen Ge knew about the scary monsters hidden in the black fog. The memory of the sleazy middle-aged man being chomped by one of them was still fresh on Chen Ge’s mind.

“I cannot miss any clues. Since I have already entered this door, I will eventually have to interact with the black fog...”

Taking a deep breath, Chen Ge carried his backpack, took out his hammer, and stepped carefully into the fog. Using his Yin Yang Vision, Chen Ge started to search around the rooftop. It did not take long for him to find a heavily broken mud statuette.

The statuette was poorly made, and it looked similar to the other mud statuettes that Chen Ge had encountered in real life, but unlike the others, this statuette had been beheaded. From the breaking point, it did not appear that the head had broken accidentally but was forcibly yanked off by someone or something.

Chen Ge’s eyes wandered to the statuette’s chest. Two words were carved there—Xiang Nuan.

“This is Xiang Nuan’s mud statuette? Why would his own statuette appear behind his door? Was he the one who broke the statuette?”

Many questions bubbled up in his mind. Before he could give them much thought, harrowing wails drifted into his ears.

“A monster from the fog?”

Not daring to test his luck, Chen Ge grabbed the mud statuette, turned, and ran.

Chapter 1088 White Rice, Chopsticks, Paper Dolls, Red Candle 2 in 1

“Save me.”

"I am right here. Behind you. Save me."

"Bring me with you. Bring me away from this place. Help me..."

Underneath the constant crying was the sound of a woman. Chen Ge felt that the voice of this woman sounded quite familiar. "I believe I heard this voice in Li Wan City."

In any case, it was not the time to meet some old friends. Chen Ge swore not to turn his head around. He had no idea what was hiding inside the black fog, and the best way to face the unknown was first to find a safe place to observe it from a far and not walk right into it while putting one's life on the line.

The voice came closer and closer, and Chen Ge walked faster and faster. However, the quicker Chen Ge moved, the more desperate and urgent the voice became. Just as he was about to reach the iron door, the woman's voice changed. All the words turned into screams, and they shot at Chen Ge's body like sharp arrows shooting through the black fog.

"Get out of the way!" Chen Ge threw caution to the wind and ran as fast as he could. The moment he stepped into the building, the scary voice disappeared without a trace. Chen Ge turned back to look. Everything had returned to normal inside the black fog; it was as if he had imagined everything that had happened to him earlier.

"Wen Qing, did you hear the voice of a woman when you were standing inside the building?"

"I do not think so." Wen Qing shook her head. "I merely saw your body disappear into the black fog. Your movement became very difficult to follow. However, there appeared to be something following behind you that was standing on their toes. I shouted very loudly to warn you, but you did not react at all."

"This black fog appears to be more dangerous than the red city. The city will cause one to go insane with despair, but this sea of blackness can make one lose oneself fully and completely."

Looking at the shadows lurking in the darkness, Chen Ge held his hand over his heart. For some reason, he felt like he had experienced this some time ago. This was not his first encounter with the black sea.

"Makes one lose oneself? Is that what happened to Xiang Nuan? He has lost his way in this black fog?" Wen Qing's eyes were overflowing with worry.

"As long as he still has not left this residential area, we have a chance of finding him." Chen Ge shut the door that led to the roof and shoved the headless mud statuette into his coat pocket. "It's time for us to leave."

Returning to the first floor, Chen Ge had just reached the door to Uncle Huang's room when the front door opened on its own. Uncle Huang, who had a serious hunchback, was standing at the door. It felt like he had been standing behind the door for some time already, waiting for Chen Ge to come.

"Did you know I will return to you?"

Uncle Huang did not answer. Instead, he turned and walked into the room. When he passed the dining table, he picked up the cleaver that was placed on top of it. The old man, who was thin as a stick, grabbed the cleaver and started to hack at the wall next to the bedroom. The blade cut into the wall,

and the wall started to bleed. Strangely enough, as more cuts were left on the wall, more cuts also appeared on Uncle Huang's body.

As the old man continued to work, the wall was cleaved open, and the old man's body was also covered in ghastly wounds. The twig-like hand no longer had the energy to even hold the cleaver anymore. In the end, Uncle Huang collapsed to the ground.

"What in the world is going on?" Xiao Sun put down Jia Fu and ran over to help Uncle Huang, but the latter appeared like he was at the end of his line already.

"To protect another person's secret, he has to suffer the torment of his conscience. You can say that the wall is practically made from his own flesh and blood." Chen Ge walked into the room while carrying the backpack. "Now that the murderers have all been exposed, Uncle Huang has no reason or excuse to help them protect the secrets."

Stopping beside the main bedroom, Chen Ge halted for several seconds before he continued moving forward. There were two bedrooms in this house. One was Uncle Huang's bedroom, and the other bedroom was blocked off by flesh and blood. This second bedroom was stuffed with dead bodies.

"Initially, the room was only occupied by the landlord's family members. The landlord did not wish to be separated from them, so he would occasionally come to visit them. But I did not expect the landlord to bring more and more 'people' to come and stay with his family." Using his literal last breath, Uncle Huang revealed the truth. "Perhaps from the very beginning, I should not have promised to help him guard this secret."

The scene inside the bedroom was straight out of hell. This was the location where all the sin at Jin Hwa Apartments Block A started. It was also the first secret that manifested there. Pushing away Xiao Sun, who was stunned beyond words, Chen Ge entered the bedroom and squeezed into the 'crowd'.

"I can tell that you believe the landlord is a good person, but have you considered the alternative? What if his family did not die from an accident?" Chen Ge managed to find the dead bodies of the landlord's family, but unfortunately, he failed to find anything useful on them. These carcasses were not the source of that horrible stench. "Just what exactly is the thing that has been radiating this stench that has troubled me for so long?"

Standing alone amid the 'crowd', what Chen Ge did next shocked the people around him.

He trained his focus by closing his eyes. Chen Ge used the talent gifted to him by the black phone, Spirit Sniff, and followed his instinct to start to search inside the bedroom. Slowly but surely, he followed the trail that would lead him to the source of the stench in this building. When he opened his eyes, Chen Ge saw the arm of a rag doll. The rag doll's arm was covered in blood and other dirty stains. Chen Ge had a feeling that the arm of this doll was not stuffed with a common material like cotton but probably trash and the carcasses of small animals.

"What is this?" Chen Ge was about to pick up the doll's arm when an extremely sense of danger arose from his mind. Then there was something like a shake, and the whole building shook underneath him. It felt like the trembling of an earthquake.

"Is this rag doll's broken arm the source of the horrible smell?"

Before Chen Ge could understand the importance behind it, he heard rapid knocking coming from outside.

Dong, dong, dong.

It was the apartment's front door. Someone was knocking against it from outside. Chen Ge stood up and stayed away from the broken arm. Instantly, the knocking on the door and the tremors disappeared.

"This thing is able to affect the entire residential area. When I was about to pick it up, something in my mind warned me of an imminent danger. This does not belong to Xiang Nuan. It probably belongs to the ghost fetus."

This situation had not happened in any of the other doors that Chen Ge had entered, so he could not afford to be too careful.

"Back when I was in Li Wan City, the shadow used this method to cut open Xiao Bu's body and kept them hidden in different buildings, making use of Xiao Bu's power to complete his own conspiracy. This is too similar to be a coincidence. This rag doll's severed arm is probably the same as what happened to Xiao Bu. The ghost fetus cut it up and placed different parts in different building as a foundation to steady this residential area."

Chen Ge memorized the location of the broken arm. He decided to leave immediately to go and look at the other buildings.

Walking out from the 'crowd', the stench lingered on Chen Ge's body. The smell would probably follow him until he left the door.

"Moments earlier, there was someone knocking on the front door. Have they noticed the change that has happened inside the building?"

"We will know for sure when we go out." Chen Ge turned to look at Xiao Sun. "Are you going to follow me and leave this place in search of the truth, or are you going to stay to wait for the other tenants from the other buildings to come find you?"

"How come it feels like you have not given me a choice in your statement at all?" Xiao Sun carried Uncle Huang to the bed. "I will go with you, but someone has to stay to look after them, right?"

He was talking about Uncle Huang and Jia Fu.

"Granny Lee can stay and do that." Chen Ge placed Granny Lee's bowl beside Uncle Huang. "Granny, I will leave them in your care. If we can find a way out, we will definitely come back to fetch all of you."

He gestured for a long time before Granny Lee stopped following him.

"Is this old lady not really crazy?" Xiao Sun whispered softly beside Chen Ge.

"This whole act is just her way to survive inside the building. What is so surprising about that? There are more scammers and people acting crazy in real life compared to this place behind the door." Chen Ge came to the entrance and found the key that would open it. "This stretch of road between the two buildings will be very dangerous; you will need to stay close to me. Grab hold of my elbows and do not let go no matter what."

The key entered the keyhole. The spring sprung for a release, and the iron lock on the door was opened.

“Follow me and stay close!” Chen Ge took out Doctor Skull Cracker’s hammer from his backpack and strode into the black fog without any hesitation. Xiao Sun and Wen Qing stayed close behind him. His extremely good sense came into use here. Before Chen Ge opened the door, he had already confirmed his destination through the window. The closest building to Jin Hwa Apartments Block A was a small building that was six stories tall. This building was situated right between Jin Hwa Apartments Block A and Block B. The location was strange indeed.

The residential area behind the door was different from how it was situated in real life. Even though the number buildings had not changed, the appearance and the overall location of them had shifted. A few of the smaller buildings that should be at Jiu Hong Apartments surrounded the two apartment buildings of Jin Hwa Apartments. They twisted and leaned like the Tower of Pisa. They teetered like dead bodies being arranged in grotesque poses. They had only walked a few meters when Chen Ge saw a human shadow not far away from them. The shadow did not appear to have noticed them.

“I think I hear someone calling my name,” Xiao Sun whispered.

“Shut up if you do not want to die.” Chen Ge answered without turning his head back. Grabbing the handle of the hammer, he walked faster and faster. The front door behind him was slowly swallowed up by the black fog. The buildings around them turned blurry. The world appeared to have been corrupted by the black fog, and everything appeared behind a sheen of blackness. Two different forces were applied on his elbows. Chen Ge could feel from this physical contact that both Wen Qing and Xiao Sun were extremely afraid; they held onto Chen Ge like he was their only hope. The distance between the two buildings was only several dozen meters, but it felt like they had been trekking forever.

“We are almost there!” With his Yin Yang Vision, Chen Ge managed to see the outline of the building’s front door. It was open and he could look into the building. The building before them appeared much older and tattered than Jin Hwa Apartments Block A. “This is one of the buildings from Jiu Hong Apartments. Even in real life, it is a much more chaotic and dirty place compared to Jin Hwa Apartments.”

Perhaps Wen Qing and Xiao Sun had helped distract the things in the black fog, but Chen Ge was not influenced that much by the monsters in the black fog this time. However, after he strode into the building, he noticed something was not right. “Are you two okay?”

Chen Ge’s elbow was bleeding slightly because of how hard Wen Qing was holding on to him. The woman’s face was blanched, and her eyes were hollowed. It looked like she had seen something incredibly horrible during the small journey earlier, and she was still too shock to complete a simple sentence.

It was even worse for Xiao Sun. Five new wounds appeared on his back. It looked like a claw had scratched him on his back, but strangely enough, the young man did not feel anything at all. Blood kept leaking. Xiao Sun’s shirt was dyed red. The wounds were extremely shallow, but for some reason, no amount of bandaging would help stop the bleeding.

“When I turned back to look, I saw a person following behind us. He was so close to us, but I was unable to see his face. It was like he was not real but a coagulation of the black fog itself.” Xiao Sun had a very

close encounter with the monster inside the black fog, and his words provided Chen Ge with valuable clues.

“Do you feel anything coming from your back?”

“There is this pain, a pain that drills straight to the heart.”

“Try your best to hold on.” Chen Ge had no better ideas. He then turned to Wen Qing. “Are you feeling better? Did you see something scary in the fog as well?”

“I saw that above our heads...” The fear was palpable in Wen Qing’s eyes. “Many human heads were floating. They were biting and chomping on a large shadow. A few of the heads spotted us, and they were looking at us through the fog...”

“Human heads? Can you be more specific?”

“I really can’t explain it. Just the sight of them caused my heart to roll with revulsion and fear. If not for the fact that I was holding onto your elbow, I probably would have lost the courage to move any further.” Wen Qing looked as pale as a sheet of paper.

“Both of you have seen something in the fog, but I saw nothing. That is strange because my five senses should be sharper than the two of you.” Chen Ge took note of that peculiarity. “In any case, we are out of the fog. We should pay attention to this new building. The front door to this building is not locked, so the situation here might be wildly different from Jin Hwa Apartments Block A, you two had better be alert and stay close to me.”

“Based on the walls and the corridors, this should be one of the buildings under Jiu Hong Apartments.” Wen Qing held onto the wall and started to stand up. She lifted her head to look around her before she finally found the thing she was looking for. “Chen Ge, look over there. What is written on that sign?”

“I think it reads Jiu Hong Apartments Block One?”

“That sign is used to number the buildings of Jiu Hong Apartments. It was nailed there many years ago.” Wen Qing was the estate agent for the apartments, so she had a clear understanding of these two residential areas in real life.

“Let’s go in and take a look. Hopefully, this building is different from the one that I currently rent, and there are not that many strange neighbors.” Xiao Sun felt like he had been ‘inoculated’ after experiencing so many things that night. Nothing was able to scare him now.

“I hope that there are people like that staying here. In the world behind the door, the tenants back there were considered easier to deal with already.” Chen Ge walked ahead with Doctor Skull Cracker’s Hammer. Just as he entered the building, he was hit by a familiar smell. The smell was similar to the one radiating from the doll’s broken arm. “A part of the rag doll’s body should be hidden inside this building as well. What does the rag doll represent to the ghost fetus? Could it be that the ghost fetus has once possessed that rag doll?”

There was no light on the first floor of Jiu Hong Apartments Block One. It was incredibly quiet. It felt like the building was unoccupied. As they walked down the corridor, Chen Ge stopped suddenly after a few steps.

There were four rooms on each floor of this building. Chen Ge saw that in front of all four doors on this floor, there was a bowl of white rice with two chopsticks stuck vertically into each of them.

But that was not the strangest discovery. Chen Ge slowly and carefully moved closer to study them. He realized that the chopsticks that were stuck into the bowls of white rice were similar to the ones from Xiang Nuan's home.

A bowl of rice represents a family, and a pair of chopsticks represents a dead person?

Chen Ge looked at the four bowls of rice that were arranged neatly in the corridor, and he was instantly reminded of the bag of chopsticks hidden under Xiang Nuan's bed. The boy covered the floor of his bedroom with chopsticks, his favorite toy.

"Hey, don't you think the bowls are very similar to the one Granny Lee was holding the whole time?" Xiao Sun asked. With a wound on his back, he used some time before he squatted down next to Chen Ge.

"They are quite similar." Chen Ge thought further than Xiao Sun. He was reminded of the recording that they saw in the landlord's room on the tenth floor. Granny Lee's son, who was in his fifties, had thrown Granny Lee's black and white picture and the sacrificial food on the altar at Granny Lee and then moved to strangle Granny Lee.

"What is this trying to express? How come I have a very bad feeling about this?" Chen Ge avoided the bowls on the ground and stuck his body close to the gap of the door.

Chapter 1089 Cemetery Building 2 in 1

Chen Ge looked through the gap into the room. Even with the aid of Yin Yang Vision, he could not see anything clearly. He trained his ears to listen. There was no sound coming from inside the room. In fact, the whole building was eerily quiet.

"This feels so weird."

An empty apartment building had bowls of white rice placed before every door. That would be an uncomfortable sight for anyone.

"This building does not appear to be prepared for living tenants." Chen Ge pulled back his gaze. He had been through a lot and came to this conclusion based on his previous experience.

"If it is not meant for living tenants, do you mean it is meant for dead tenants?" Xiao Sun held his back with his hands. He sidled between Wen Qing and Chen Ge. His eyes occasionally wandered to other places as if something scary might jump out at him at any moment.

"If there are places for people to stay, there must be places for ghosts to stay. What is so strange about that? Ghosts need homes like we do." Chen Ge turned to Wen Qing. "We are now in Jiu Hong Apartments. In your mind, what is the biggest difference between Jiu Hong Apartments and Jin Hwa Apartments?"

"Hmm. There is not much difference between them. If you really insist on one, Jin Hwa Apartments was built several years later than Jiu Hong Apartments. That is all." Wen Qing tried to think of anything else.

“Try to jog your memory and dig deeper. Maybe there is something that you have forgotten. There is no detail that is too small.” Jiu Hong Apartments obviously had a bigger problem than Jin Hwa Apartments. As dangerous as Jin Hwa Apartments was, at least it was occupied by living humans. This building from Jiu Hong Apartments was basically empty and quiet. However, Chen Ge was sure that was only its appearance.

“Jiu Hong Apartments was one of the earliest residential area to be built at the old city. The buildings here are very old, and the buildings need constant repair. The rooms have many problems. Normally, there aren’t any people who are interested in renting a room here, so I rarely bring people here for a tour.”

“The rooms have many problems? What do you mean by that?”

“Things like water leaks, bad lighting, sound pollution, and so on.”

“Wait a minute. If there aren’t many tenants like you said, why is there a sound pollution? Who is making all that noise?” Chen Ge’s one question stumped Wen Qing speechless.

“Er... Our company did not really give us a clear explanation on that. At the time, our boss did come over to investigate, but he failed to find the source of the commotion, and then the issue was kinda forgotten.”

“Your company sure is a courageous one. Now I suspect whether you guys do business with the dead as well.” Chen Ge had been to Jiu Hong Apartments in real life. Even in the morning, the place was uncomfortably eerie and secluded.

“Don’t make that kind of joke. We are serious housing agency.” Wen Qing’s face paled. She seemed to be reminded of something. “The first batch of tenants that lived at Jiu Hong Apartments all moved away. The company did not really know why. Most of them left without saying a word. the company was unable to contact them to get an explanation at all. That is why most of the rooms in Jiu Hong Apartments were left empty, and that was related to the low number of tenants that we currently have.”

“The old tenants that moved away have not returned?”

“Most of them left in the middle of the night and in a hurry. They did not even take their furniture with them.”

“Does that feel like a normal moving away to you?” Chen Ge was quite speechless.

“Once this strange incident was exposed to the public, who would dare come and rent their apartments anymore? At least I would never do so!” Xiao Sun covered his back. He was one of the victims.

“Now, you have piqued my interest regarding your agency’s boss. Just what kind of person would be brave enough to take over Jin Hwa Apartments and Jiu Hong Apartments? If my memory serves me right, your company’s name is Jiu Hong Housing Agency as well. Is your boss somehow related to Jiu Hong Apartments?” Chen Ge wanted to get some questions clarified before he started the investigation.

“Our boss is an impressive businessman. His surname is Jiang, and he has a lot of real estate under his name. They are not only in Jiujiang, but there are some in Xin Hai as well. Jiu Hong Housing Agency is

one of his earliest projects, but for now, he has basically allowed it to survive on its own. He will only transfer some money to help the agency when the agency is in serious financial trouble. Most of the time, he just let us be." In Wen Qing's mind, their boss was an amazing person.

"Jiu Hong Housing Apartments is an investment that is leaking money, so why would a sensible businessman keep maintaining a place like this? Is there a reason behind it? Is there something he wants to hide?" Chen Ge asked. "What is your boss' name?"

"Jiang Jiu. He is also one of the biggest shareholders in Eastern Jiujiang's futuristic theme park. He is a partner with many big companies."

"Jiang Jiu?" When Chen Ge heard this name, many things started to click. The so-called Jiu Hong Housing Agency was a plot between Jiang Jiu and the ghost fetus. Over this past decade, they had probably been selecting their tenants and assigned them to fixed rooms. Now that he thought about it, perhaps the boss of Jin Hwa Corps was related to the ghost fetus as well. After all, the landlord probably slowly spiraled into insanity due to the influence by the ghost fetus.

"Boss Jiang is a very nice person. He was the one who offered me a job and provided me with free accommodation. Do you know how difficult it is to find a home in a city like Jiujiang?" Wen Qing's praise toward Jiang Jiu kept pouring out. The woman was oblivious to the fact that there was a price to all the 'kindness' that she had received in her life. All the clues had started to link together. Jiu Hong Apartments was specially prepared for Xiang Nuan. This place was probably the warm bed for the boy who was the most suitable candidate for the ghost fetus to take over.

"Was it the ghost fetus' intention for that old fox to build the futuristic theme park at Jiujiang, or has he found some hidden secret through the ghost fetus and thus wanted to build a theme park in Jiujiang?" Chen Ge had already memorized the name Jiang Jiu in his mind. He did not wish to do anything to Jiang Jiu. He just wanted to go and meet this Jiang Jiu after he left this door. "Since the man has the capability to cooperate with the ghost fetus, maybe I can persuade him to cooperate with me. No matter what, I will have to go meet the man to hear his side of the story."

After uncovering these details, Chen Ge had a new understanding of the building he was in. Xiang Nuan was different from other children, at least the ghost fetus thought so. "We have stayed here long enough. We should prepare to go upstairs."

The staircase was not locked. However, strangely enough the black fog outside was unable to roll in. It was as if each building was protected by some kind of unique power.

"One of the rag doll's broken body parts must be hidden here as well." Chen Ge led Wen Qing and Xiao Sun to the second floor. This floor looked even more dilapidated than the first floor. Paper money littered the ground, and an inverted 'Joy', written calligraphically on white paper, was pasted at the turn of the staircase.

"It does not look like any of the rooms are conducting a funereal ceremony, but how come there are bowls of white rice placed before every door? Who is the rice for?" The pair of chopsticks was placed right in the middle of the white rice. It was unclear whether they were meant for the 'people' inside the room or the 'people' outside the room. Other than the calligraphy, there was not much different between the first and second floor. Even the scratch marks on the doors looked the same.

For the sake of security, Chen Ge still gave each door a slight push. Most of the doors were wooden door. Some of the locks had already loosened, so the gap between the frame and the door could get very wide. From left to right, the numbering for the rooms on the second floor was 201 to 204. When Chen Ge pushed on the door for Room 201, he did not feel anything, but when he reached the door of Room 203, he started to sense that something was out of place.

He tried to push the door as hard as he could, but the door refused to budge. But when he stopped pushing, the door would slightly vibrate. It was as if when he applied pressure on the door, there was someone on the other side pushing back. But when he stopped, the person inside the room also stopped pushing. Chen Ge took out Doctor Skull Cracker's Hammer from his backpack as he slowly found his way to the door of Room 204. This door was old and looked like it might break with the slightest touch. The surface of the door was filled with the muddy handprints of children and unclear scratch marks. There was a gap about two centimeters between the bottom of the door and the floor. The door itself was already loose. It looked like it could not close fully.

"Do not come over here. Keep an eye out on the staircase. We do not want to get surrounded and have our exit cut off."

After Chen Ge said that, he slowly moved to the side of the door. He reached out to slowly push the bowl on the ground aside. When he was halfway through this, he suddenly knelt to the ground and looked through the gap on the ground!

A pair of pupil-less eyes flashed by, and then a curtain of black hair disappeared from underneath the gap.

"There is someone inside!" Chen Ge was not sure whether that was a tenant or not, but his instinct told him that it was not a living human. It might not even be something that was created from Xiang Nuan's memories.

"Big brother, can you not scare people like that?" Xiao Sun jumped from the scare earlier. It tore open the wounds on his back, causing them to sear with pain.

"Shush, be quiet." Chen Ge stood up again. He took out the comic from his backpack to take a look, and then his grip on the hammer slowly tightened. His employees still had not awakened, but the ghosts had already started to show their presence in the building. This was the situation that he was most worried about.

Ta ta ta...

While Chen Ge was contemplating what to do next, a strange sound came from the stairs. It sounded like a child running down the corridor, but the sound soon disappeared.

"That sounds like it came from the top floor. Shall we go take a look?" Xiao Sun looked as unwilling as possible, but he still uttered that suggestion.

"There's no need to hurry. We need to tackle this step by step. If there is extreme danger hiding on the top floor, we will have little to no chance of escaping." Chen Ge did not choose to leave. He gripped the doorknob and gave it a few powerful shakes. After he realized the door was unable to open, he aimed at the door lock and gave it a powerful kick!

Bang!

The door fell open from the force.

The person who had been lurking at the gap had disappeared.

"I do not mean to disturb you. Please forgive my intrusion." Chen Ge slowly entered the room, dragging the hammer.

"Be careful. Make sure to not touch that bowl of white rice." This was the first time that Chen Ge had entered a room in Jiu Hong Apartments. The room size was much smaller than the room in Jin Hwa Apartments, and the place looked rather abandoned. It did not look like it had been occupied for a very long time.

"Chen Ge, take a look at this." Wen Qing pointed at the calendar that hung on the back of the door. It was marked with crosses using a red marker. It looked quite ghastly. "The calendar is not marked with a year, and a large part of it is missing, but a few of the dates are jotted with some reminders..."

There was no light in the room, so Wen Qing took out her phone to use as a flashlight. When she leaned closer to the calendar, she suddenly let out a scream.

"What's wrong?"

"There... there's hair." Wen Qing's phone dropped to the group. The flashlight hit Chen Ge and Xiao Sun's faces, turning their faces white.

"I am so sorry." Wen Qing apologized as she hurried to pick up the phone, but for some reason, the scene from earlier was seared into her mind. Chen Ge and Xiao Sun were staring blankly at her with their pale and white faces. "They appear to be the same kind of person..."

Xiao Sun did not hear her because he was looking around the room for clues, but Chen Ge heard Wen Qing clearly. He saw Wen Qing's shaking shoulders, but he did not walk over to comfort her.

"Be careful not to stray too far away from me. The three of us must ensure that none of us leave each other's sight."

After giving that reminder, Chen Ge started to search the living room, Xiao Sun entered the kitchen while Wen Qing held the wall and slowly approached the bedroom. The wooden bed had a mattress that was moldy from the years. There appeared to be something hidden under the cover since it was bulging. The bed was close to the wall, and a white mosquito net hung at the four corners.

"I have a mosquito net at my place as well. When Xiang Nuan first saw it, he refused to even get in. He kept crying and making a fuss." The thought of Xiang Nuan calmed Wen Qing down. She entered the bedroom and opened the closet in the room. The broken closet had a few articles of clothing that were seriously moth infested.

"I have not seen this style of clothing before. Are these cheongsams?" She reached into the closet, wishing to take one out for a closer look. When her fingertips touched the fabric of the clothes, Wen Qing was about to take it out, but five fingers suddenly reached out from a corner inside the closet and grabbed her hand!

The color drained from her face immediately. Before Wen Qing could scream for help, the hand had already disappeared.

"Chen..." Wen Qing wanted to call for help, but she suddenly realized that she had lost the ability to speak. She slowly lowered her head to look, and she saw a pair of white hands strangling her neck. Strange noises were coming from the closet before her. The clothes that hung together were slowly pushed away, and a head of black hair poked out from the gap. It was followed by a pale face that slowly reached toward Wen Qing. Unable to speak, Wen Qing's body was slowly dragged into the closet by the pair of hands. Wen Qing stared into the pupil-less eyes, and all she could see was the reflection of her own face twisted in a fearful grimace.

Bang!

Just as her body was about to be dragged into the closet, the closet door was suddenly slammed shut. Wen Qing blinked, and she jumped from the shock. Then she realized that she was still standing before the closet, and her hands were holding the closet doors open.

"Are you alright?" Chen Ge dragged the hammer and entered the bedroom.

"I... I am fine." Wen Qing shook her head. She could not tell if what had happened earlier was just her mind playing tricks on her or if it really did happen. After entering the black fog, she felt that there was something wrong with her body. For example, it appeared like she was the only one who was able to see the human heads in the black fog.

"You do not look fine at all." Chen Ge gave Wen Qing a reassuring squeeze on her shoulder. "Do not keep these things to yourself. Tell me everything you know and saw. It might help us."

Many horror movies had similar plots. One of the group felt that something was wrong, but when questioned, the character would refuse to say anything. That was a hidden bomb waiting to explode. Chen Ge would not allow something like that to happen to him. Once there was something off, he would need to get to the bottom of the truth.

With Chen Ge pressing her, Wen Qing finally came out with the truth. "I do not know what really happened. I believe, in a daze, I tried to open the closet. There was a pale face hidden inside. His eyes had no pupils, and he slowly squeezed out from between the clothes. He strangled me with his hands, and I was unable to call for help."

"The eyes did not have any pupils?" Chen Ge nodded.

"Do you have any clue of what that was?"

"Not really. I just thought his method of scaring people is worth learning. It is an interesting experience." Chen Ge looked at the closet next to them. "We will call him the closet ghost for now. Is he still inside the closet?"

"I think so."

"What did you do earlier to make it come out?"

"I only opened the door and reached into the middle of the clothes. Then, it appeared."

Just as Wen Qing finished, Chen Ge opened the closet and reached into the middle of the clothes.

"Just like that?"

"Yes."

"How come he is not coming out to meet me?" Chen Ge rummaged through the clothes inside the closet. He did not find the closet ghost he was looking for, but he did find other clues in the pockets of these old clothes.

He found several bedsheets that were torn apart, and they were covered in words written in blood.

Chapter 1090 Again and Again 2 in 1

"It has come again today. It still stood at the door. I have no idea what it wanted to do. It seemed like it wanted to come in.

"It looks like my dead child. At least from the back, they look the same.

"My family saw it as well, it was not an illusion; it really exists. But why does it always face away from us? Which family does it come from, and why does it appear at the staircase every time at midnight?

"My husband said that he would go out to take a look, but he never returned after leaving the house. He has abandoned me and run away on his own.

"What should I do? It was getting closer and closer to me. It always leaned on the door and window, and eventually, it would come into the house.

"After I woke up, I saw it appear in our living room. It did not seem to notice me. It was standing in the middle of the living room, facing away from me.

"I finally saw its face. Why would a rag doll pace around my house? What is it looking for? Why does it come to my house? What is its purpose for coming here?

"It is too disgusting. I have never seen such a disgusting doll in my life. Its arms are filled with trash and bodies of small birds. Its stomach has a reeking heart, its face is sewn together from different skin, and its legs were bent, stuffed with bones that it picked from who knows where. It was radiating this horrible smell. The pitiable face makes it look that much scarier!

"I realized there is one thing that is very strange about this doll. Its shadow is not the shadow of a normal doll. When the light hits it, the shadow that is reflected is a boy that is much taller than the doll itself.

"Everyone hates it. Does the doll not know that? Why does it refuse to go? Why does it appear like it is trying to endear itself to me? This is crazy!

"It seemed to have treated this place as its own home, this blasted doll!

"I am not its mother, and I am not its family!

"I have to chase it away no matter what! I must!

"I have torn it into pieces, stuffed it inside the trash bags, and buried them in the ground. I thought that was the end of everything, but when I woke up, it had appeared in my room again!

"I already do not have a family life—why does this strange creature refuse to leave me be?"

"I have sent it away again and again. But he started to appear at various places at my house. Inside the closet, under the bed, inside the cover, underneath the desk—it could be hiding at any places inside my house!

"What do I need to do to chase it away!"

The blood handwriting at the end had become completely twisted and hard to read. The handwriting was mixed with blood vessels and fingernails. It showed that the mental condition of the writer was at the edge of insanity. In fact, Chen Ge could easily imagine a woman with disheveled hair, biting on her nails, tearing at the cover, writing these sentences with her bloody fingers. Chen Ge moved to the last bloody sheet, and the content caused his spine to tingle in discomfort.

"I've finally understood what it wants. I am not its mother, and it does not want me to be its mother; he merely wanted to crawl into my stomach. When I woke up in the middle of the night, dazed, I saw the smiling face in my stomach. It was then that I realize I probably will never be able to send it away anymore."

The blood messages on the bedsheet ended there. Just by reading them, Wen Qing beside Chen Ge felt extremely uncomfortable. Probably because they were both women, she could empathize further with the desperation and pain of the owner of the house.

"Are these bloody messages trying to warn us that the monster inside this building is actually a rag doll?" Even though Xiao Sun always found himself with his foot in his mouth, the young man was not dumb. Especially when they were in danger, his brain was able to work exceptionally fast.

"I believe so." Chen Ge looked at the bloody sentences, and his eyes stared at one of the many statements—"Its shadow is not the shadow of a normal doll. When the light hits it, the shadow that is reflected is a boy that is much taller than the doll itself."

When he saw these few words, a speculation arose in Chen Ge's heart.

The ghost that possessed the rag doll might be my own shadow. After he escaped from me, he became the shadow of this rag doll. But the rag doll itself had no consciousness. In fact, the rag doll might be the body that he had made for himself.

Inside Jin Hwa Apartments Block A, the rag doll's broken arm was the source of all the stench that lingered in the building, but it was also possible that it was due to the presence of the broken arm that the building was safe from the infiltration of the black fog.

The rag doll should be a body that the ghost fetus had once used in the past. Based on the description on these bloody messages, he had gone through quite a bit of trouble for the sake of this ugly body that he had made for himself.

Behind Fang Yu's door, Chen Ge was given a glimpse of a small part of the ghost fetus' past. The ghost fetus then was completely different from the ghost fetus now. The shadow took one step after another

to become a Demon God, but it had now completely lost itself, and the sign of its former self was no longer there. The bloody messages recorded quite clearly that the rag doll did not do anything to harm the tenants inside the building at the beginning. But its presence was in itself a type of 'sin'. It was because the owner kept trying to throw him away that the rag doll took revenge. That seemed the inevitable outcome.

"Jin Hwa Apartments recorded Xiang Nuan's life, and the ghost fetus' past might be buried among Jiu Hong Apartments." Chen Ge's shadow first made its appearance at Western Jiujiang's haunted house. Some clues as to what happened next to the shadow might be found in these few buildings. Chen Ge did not move to close the closet door; instead, he took out all the clothes from inside the closet. He did not see the monster. It seemed to have left the room.

"There are children's clothes inside the closet, and there are three pair of shoes on the shoe rack, two large pairs and one small pair. All of these signs point toward a boy once lived inside this apartment." Chen Ge placed the bloody bedsheet on the ground. "The tenants at Room 204 once had a child. That was quite clear from the messages that were left on the sheet. After their child died, this strange doll started to appear. The rag doll did not appear to wish to harm them initially. If anything, it seemed to hope that it could live together with them."

"Do you think that was possible? Based on the description, the rag doll was a scary monster—who would want to stay with that kind of thing?" Xiao Sun could not wrap his head around what Chen Ge was saying.

"Both you and the owner of the house thought the rag doll was a monster, but have you tried to consider this from the rag doll's perspective? Do you think it will see itself as a monster?" Chen Ge pointed at the bloody words on the sheets. "Bones in its legs, heart in its stomach, and it even has a face albeit one that is sewn together. This proves that the doll has been trying its best to mimic a human with the only resources made available to him."

"How come it just sounds scarier when you put it that way?"

"The rag doll wants to be a person; it desires to have a life like a normal being. It desires after family and love, but he has greatly underestimated the difficulty of becoming a human." Chen Ge was being very rational. "It had no idea what a human being was, and it had even less of an idea what it represented to those around him. Actually, you could see it as a child, but due to the seduction by the demon, it had become a very scary child."

"No matter what, it is the truth that he eventually killed the owner of this house. I do not care what his intention was. If anything, I feel like he has had horrible intentions from the very beginning. I even suspect that the child of the owner's family was killed by this doll." Wen Qing's face had some color returned to it, but she still did not wish to look at the bloody messages any longer.

"I admit that is one of the possibilities as well." Chen Ge folded the bedsheet and carried it in his hands. "We have searched most of this house already. It is time to move on to the other houses."

"Are you planning to take those tattered bedsheet pieces with you?" Wen Qing and Xiao Sun asked at the same time. "The thing is such a taboo. Why don't we put it back where we found it?"

“Okay.” Chen Ge had limited space in his backpack. He unwillingly placed the bedsheet pieces back into the closet.

I cannot use the comic now. When the employees wake up, I’ll have time to come back.

The ghost inside Room 204 did not show itself. The room appeared like it had been abandoned for a very long time. After walking out from Room 204, Wen Qing who was the first to step out from the door halted at the door.

“What’s wrong?”

“There is blood on the ground...”

The few looked at the spot that was lit up by Wen Qing’s flashlight on her phone. A pool of fresh blood was left at the front door of Room 204. When they were conducting their search inside the house, it appeared like there was something standing at the door observing them, and the thing had stood there for quite a long time.

“There are blood traces on the wall as well, look! There are so many handprints!” Wen Qing pointed at the wall next to the door. There were many handprints that looked like they were left behind by a baby. It looked like a baby had rapidly crawled along the wall earlier.

“There sure are a lot of strange things inside this building.” Chen Ge used Yin Yang Vision to follow the trail of bloody handprints until he reached the mouth of the staircase. “It has gone up to the third floor?”

“Should we continue up? How about we return to Jin Hwa Apartments’ Block A, lock the front door so that the people from the outside cannot come in, and wait for the sun to rise?”

“What if the sun will never come up?” Chen Ge ignored Xiao Sun. He moved faster and entered the staircase directly. A faded scent of mildew and some stench started to permeate the air. The building was still immensely quiet, but this quiet was different from the normal quiet. It felt like the spirit of the building had been hollowed out by some unknown object, and the souls of the previous tenants that had stayed at this place had all been sucked away.

With his sharp five senses, Chen Ge felt this the most intensely. It felt as if the moment he stepped into this building, his soul would involuntarily be trapped forever. It did not take that long to move from the second floor to the third floor, but the temperature around them had suddenly dropped tremendously. Banknotes littered the ground, and every single room had the inverted ‘joy’ calligraphically written on white paper pasted on their front door. The old doors did not have the traditional picture of Chinese door guardians but were pasted with two white pieces of paper.

“The door guardians are used to protect the house from evil spirits, so what’s the purpose of these two pieces of white paper?”

More questions awaited Chen Ge. The lock of Room 301 was completely broken; the door could not be closed at all. The door was hanging open slightly. Outside the door was a bowl of white rice with a pair of chopsticks in it, and other than that, there was a copper basin that was filled with gray dust. To enter the house, one had to walk over the copper basin. That in itself was nothing, but Chen Ge managed to see quite clearly with Yin Yang Vision that the following was written at the edge of the copper basin.

‘Those who walk over this basin will receive the torment of the mountain of blades and the torture of the sea of fire. They will have their eyes gouged out and their heart punctured.’

Chen Ge himself did not believe in these things, but now that he was inside the world behind another person’s door, that did not matter much. The key was whether the door pusher believed in such things.

“Is this some kind of curse?”

The door was left open, but Chen Ge did not dare enter it brashly. He merely pushed open the door and peered inside to look. The interior of the room had signs of being burnt. Banknotes that were half burnt covered the ground. There were four small incense burners placed in the four corners of the room. The pots holding the burners had a very strange appearance; they had the shape of a kneeling man, like they were supplicating themselves for their sin.

“Do any of you understand what this is supposed to represent?” Wen Qing asked Xiao Sun and Chen Ge. She stood at the door with a nervous expression on her face.

“It is perhaps some kind of exorcism ritual.” Xiao Sun looked at the strange décor of the room and had no intention of entering the place at all.

“No matter what it was for, they failed in the end.” Chen Ge pointed at the lock of the door that had fallen completely off. “Look at the spot where the lock is connected to the frame. It was obviously cracked by brute force. Not only did the people inside the house fail to chase away the ghost, they completely angered the ghost.”

He moved the copper basin to the corner of the wall.

“This way, we won’t need to step over the basin to get into the room. If this thing is any use, we can consider taking it with us. Whether it’s placed in the middle of the corridor or at the entrance of any room, it will serve the same purpose.”

Neither Xiao Sun nor Wen Qing knew how to reply. Both of them thought that did not sound that appropriate, but after they gave it more thought, they realized that what Chen Ge said was quite logical. After they entered Room 301, for safety’s sake, Chen Ge did not have them split up. They moved as a group into all the rooms.

“There is a lot of copper money hidden under the sofa, vermillion dust inside the closet, the incense burner pots in the corners, and a trail of salt by the edge of the wall. These are all used to chase away evil spirits.” Chen Ge was very familiar with these things. When he first obtained the black phone, he had scrolled through many different kinds of supernatural forums. In the end, he concluded that ninety percent of these things were not useful; the remaining ten percent might be useful, but the set up was so complicated that he had not tested them himself.

The three walked through the living room, but they all stopped when they reached the door to the bedroom. The wooden door before them was filled with the handprint of a small child. It felt like a child was standing outside the bedroom door, slamming his palms on the door again and again at midnight. Chen Ge slowly pushed the door open. There was a king-sized bed in the room. The bed was covered in black pills that appeared like some kind of medicine, but they were arranged in a way where the shape of a human was hollowed out in the middle of the bed.

A few pieces of yellowed paper were left around the bed. Some words were written unevenly on them.

“The first time I saw it, it was outside the window. It was leaning on the edge of the window, but I soon remembered that I live on the third floor.

“The second time I saw it, it was behind my front door. I did not notice it when I opened the door, but when I closed the door, it followed me into the room and just stood there behind the door.

“The third time I saw it, it was lying in a pile of my baby’s toys. It was mimicking the actions of my child. It was also at that moment that I threw the dirty doll away.

“The fourth time I saw it was the night I threw it away. I heard the sound coming from the living room. When I opened the bedroom door, I saw it sitting in the living room, playing with our child’s toy. My husband and I were so afraid. We switched on the light and tried to burn it with fire. We then threw the remains of this cursed doll at the heap of trash.”

“The fifth time I saw it, it was on the staircase. It pushed me from behind me. Then came the sixth time... the seventh time... The monster had decided to haunt me. I did not know what to do to make it go away.”

The words appeared to be the house owner’s call for help, but unfortunately, from the result, she had clearly failed in the end. Chen Ge picked up the yellowed paper and glanced at the cluster of bloody handprints on the bedroom door. The image of the scary rag doll slowly surfaced in his mind.