

Horrors 17

Chapter 17: Fu An Apartments

From a stranger's perspective, Wang Qi might have appeared to be too insistent in chasing the newcomer away. Therefore, Chen Ge did not promise the man anything; if anything, after listening to Wang Qi's story, he had a sneaking suspicion that the man was hiding something.

"I've told you everything I know, and there's still time to leave. When the clock strikes twelve, the apartment will turn into something else." After saying that, Wang Qi brushed the dust away from his clothes and turned to leave.

It was not until Wang Qi's shadow disappeared among the darkness of the night that Chen Ge came to. His original intention was to obtain more information from the tenants about the building, but now, he ended up with more question than answers.

That man sure is a curious character, but I can't tell whether he's crazy or not. Recalling Wang Qi's pair of cloudy eyes that had not focused once throughout their conversation, Chen Ge felt uncomfortable. The pain and tiredness in the man's eyes could not be faked. *But it does seem like he loves his fiancé dearly.*

As Chen Ge went back to his room, he paused when he passed the woman's room on the first floor. He hesitated before knocking on the room.

"Hey, fresh blood!" The woman's room door remained unmoved, but to Chen Ge's surprise, the door to the room directly opposite from hers fell open. A lanky man was leaning against the open door. He looked to be in his thirties, and the man's appearance was very unkempt. His beard was almost joined to his hair, and the back of his hand had a tattoo of a peony.

"And you are?" Chen Ge turned around with alarm.

"The man who was spreading the missing person notice around is not even a tenant of this building; there's something wrong about him up here." The thin man pointed at his temple. "Don't believe a word out that comes out of his mouth, and try not to get too close to him."

It was the first time Chen Ge had seen this man, and even though the man's appearance left much to be desired, the man's mannerisms were the most normal of all the characters he had met at the apartment. "The man's actions sure are weird, but perhaps that is because he was too devastated from the loss of his fiancé."

"Did he tell you his fiancé disappeared around this apartment?"

"Yes."

"Did he tell you he receive that information from the police and that's why he has been searching for her here?"

"Yes."

The man chuckled mirthlessly before saying, "I've lived here for nine months already, and I've seen no trace of the police coming here. The mad man is lying to you; I'm sure you don't believe his talk of ghosts, right?"

He pulled out a cigarette to dangle on his lips. "There are no ghosts in this world! At most, it's someone pretending to be a ghost. In any case, it's getting late, so you'd better return to your room."

Chen Ge thanked the man and turned to leave. As he wandered up the steps, he thought to himself, *Obviously, one of them is lying, but which is it?*

Lost in his thoughts, Chen Ge did not realize he had walked up to the third floor. The faded number was printed on the corner of the wall, and the voice-activated light above his head flickered on and off. Chen Ge looked down the long corridor and realized this whole floor was in a state of complete disrepair. The floor was thick with grime, and there were signs of burning everywhere. The coating of the wall was peeling off like skin, and underneath it were lines that looked like thick cuts.

Why have they left the third floor unfixed? Not enough budget, or is there a more sinister reason?

The voice-activated light soon went off, and Chen Ge was submerged in a world of darkness. Due to his work at the Haunted House, Chen Ge was used to working in the darkness. The sudden blindness did not unhinge him. He pulled out his phone and was about to turn the flashlight on when he spotted a shadow dash past the darkened corridor.

"Who's there?" The flashlight on the phone lit up the third floor, but the shadow was nowhere to be seen. Chen Ge was about to investigate further when he heard footsteps coming up from further down the stairs.

It's the landlord? If he was spotted by the easily-irked landlord loitering on third floor, he might get chased off the premises. Chen Ge thought about it, pocketed his phone, and stealthily retreated down to the second floor.

When he turned the corner on the stairwell, Chen Ge saw a rotund and short man coming out of a room on the second floor, holding a basin. The man was humming a happy tune, but when he saw Chen Ge, his face fell, and he immediately ran away from the scene.

What is the meaning of that? Do I look that scary? After returning to his room, Chen Ge lay in bed, hugging his backpack. *It feels like there's no normal individual in this apartment; every single one of them could be the party responsible for the murders.*

When those words rolled off his tongue, Chen Ge suddenly sat up in bed. *Wait a minute, the mission told me to find the party responsible for the murders, but the term 'party' can be both singular and plural! In that case, could there be more than one murderer? After all, if there is more than one murder, the chances of multiple murderers will drastically increase. I need to get more information on that case from years ago.*

Chen Ge pulled out his phone. His conversation with Wang Qi was not for nothing. He now had the important information that before it was called Ping An Apartments, this place was called Fu An Apartments.

He keyed in Jiujiang Fu An Apartments in the search box, and several pages later, numerous spine-chilling headlines jumped out at him.

"A family of four brutally murdered! The murderer has disappeared into thin air!"

“Accident or homicide? The truth of the fire that razed Fu An Apartments.”

“Case within a case, bodies hidden inside the building unearthed!”

Reading through the information on Fu An Apartments, Chen Ge felt his skin chilled. This was not fiction; they happened in real life, and he was currently living at the crime scene.

Five years ago, a neighbor saw the smog rising from Fu An Apartments, so he called the fire brigade. The firefighters soon put out the fire and started to investigate the source of the fire as well as gauge the extent of damage.

Initially, they thought this was going to be another accidental fire case, but as the investigation continued, more curious evidence started to surface.

The cement walls were cracked, the surface of cracked window was small, and the smog blackened the ceiling; these were all signs that the temperature of the fire was high, and it spread very fast.

There were several possible initial locations found at the building, and they were all far apart from each other, quintessential of an arson case.

Therefore, the nature of the investigation changed. After the police stepped in, they soon discovered four burnt bodies among the ruin of the fire. They believed these were the bodies of the family of four who operated the rental apartment.

This case created quite a buzz at the time. The police tried their best to solve the case, but the fire had destroyed most of the evidence. They combed the place but could not locate the evidence of a fifth person much, less catch the culprit.

The apartment was sealed for a whole year, after which ownership of the estate was passed on to the owner's father, and it was then that Fu An Apartments changed to Ping An Apartments.

The family of four was burned to the death, and the culprit still hasn't been caught. No wonder people say this place is haunted. After knowing more about the case, Chen Ge felt slightly more grounded because at least he knew what he was dealing with.

A curious detail on the reports stuck out at him. *The articles all confirm that at the time of passing, the owner was already 41 years old. The apartment was later passed on to his father, and theoretically and logically speaking, the real current owner of this place should be in his 60s or 70s already.*