

Horrors 19

Chapter 19: Rising Popularity

Afraid that the landlord next door might overhear him, Chen Ge lowered his voice to a whisper, which created an unintended tense atmosphere. After he was done, on the other end of the phone, He San was stunned. This honest young man who just came to the city from the countryside to attend medical school did not expect his first conversation with an online friend to be so freaking exciting.

“You’re currently at that cursed apartment?”

“Yes.”

“And the landlord next door might be the killer from several years ago?”

“Yes.”

“Wait a minute, this is too much for me to process at once, let me think about it first.”

This created an interesting contrast between the situations on both side of the phone; one was wrapped in his warm blanket, chewing on KFC, watching some online videos, while the other was caught in a haunted apartment, heavy with gloom and anguish.

“Boss, I still think you should report this to the police. Granted, you don’t have any actual proof, but compared to the offense of making a fake report, your life is more important.”

He San was merely looking out for him, but Chen Ge had his own consideration. This Murder by Midnight was a mission given to him by the black phone. He had to stay there overnight for the mission to be a success. Interference from the police would most likely ruin his mission. Since it involved the unlocking of a new scenario, surrendering just like that felt like a great waste. “It’s still not yet time to involve the police.”

“Mainly, it’s your safety that you should be concerned about... Boss, how about this?” He San paused before adding, “Turn on your phone’s GPS triangulation and try to keep your phone on throughout the night. I’ll pay attention to the sounds from your side, and if there’s anything weird, I’ll call the police immediately.”

That was not a bad idea. Chen Ge looked at his phone. He still had not exited the video-sharing app, and there was an advertisement for a Mukbang stream going on.

Suddenly an idea came into Chen Ge’s mind. “Why don’t I open a livestream at the haunted apartment? If anything dangerous happens to me, the viewers will be able to help me alert the police, and the recording of the livestream will be the best evidence. Of course, I hope for everything to go well, and with this method, I’ll be able to attract more viewers to my page and thus advertise my Haunted House.”

The short video from last night had brought Chen Ge about 1,000 new followers and consequently the number of visitors at his Haunted House the next day had doubled. This was a workable method. Furthermore, the ultimate goal of him entering the haunted apartment was to earn the mission reward to improve his Haunted House. If starting a livestream was able to ensure his safety while he was conducting his mission as well as increase his popularity and viewership, then why not?

“Even though I don’t have the budget to advertise my stuff all over the place, I can rely on livestreams and short videos to attract people’s attention.”

What Chen Ge was lacking in were platform, channels, and experience; in terms of content, he was not at all worried. Even though the personnel from the studio earlier was annoying, they were right. Modern entertainment was about instant gratification. What could be more exciting and intense than an overnight stay at a haunted apartment and a possible tussle with a crazed murderer?

Viewership followed content, and compared to other streamers, Chen Ge had a unique leg-up. All of his content and the stuff that he experienced was all real; there was no plot or script, and even he had no idea what might happen next. In a way, the livestream was merely a recording of him completing the mission dispensed by the black phone.

“He San, I’m ending the call. Come directly to my livestream, the stream’s ID will be similar to the ID on my personal page.”

After hanging up, Chen Ge turned on his phone’s triangulation system and set 991 as his quick dial. After everything was done, he selected the livestream option on the video-sharing app.

Videos nowadays were normally only several ten seconds long, meaning they were hard to monetize. Therefore, to improve fan loyalty and more directly monetize follower numbers, most streams would livestream when they were not preparing to release a new video.

Since short videos were easily shared, they could be used to attract the attention of random viewers. Then, with livestreams, those viewers could be turned into followers if the steamer’s content was interesting enough. Incidentally, Chen Ge had stumbled across the most correct way of establishing one’s online brand.

“Overnight at a haunted house! Your host, an intrepid explorer! Exposing the parts of the world that are normally hidden from sight!” Chen Ge used several exclamation marks in his title to separate his livestream from others.

To be honest though, he need not have done that. The livestream function attached to the video-sharing app was ultimately different from a streaming website. The categorization was limited and mostly involved talking to scantily-dressed girls. Chen Ge’s livestream was like a pile of cow dung amid a bed of roses; it was incredibly hard for him to not get noticed.

After opening the livestream, his fans that followed him would be notified, and similarly, there would be an announcement at his profile page.

In less than few seconds, the first batch of viewers arrived.

He San was the first to message. “Boss, you’re serious? You’re really going to livestream this?”

Death to all Men posted, “You’re the creep who uploaded that video yesterday night? Good, because I’m here to claim your life!”

“F*ck! Sis, what happened to you? Calm down, maybe we can talk this out.”

“Creep host, subbed,” posted I’m a Little Green Worm.

“Any subs know what the content of this stream is?”

“Do you not know how to read? The title is right there!”

The moment Chen Ge began the livestream, those who were waiting for his video showed themselves, and the viewership of his room slowly climbed.

“Guys, I think there’s a misunderstanding.” Chen Ge put his mallet away and turned to the camera seriously. “The video from last night wasn’t a joke; I experienced it myself. You can go look for the full video on supernatural forums if you do not believe me. The footage has not been tempered; the thing in the mirror is real. I know that is hard to believe, but if you follow me, I’ll unveil the hidden side of this world to you little by little.”

“Hello, 001, I’m sorry, but what is the number for mental hospital? I believe I’ve found a runaway patient.”

“I do love the way you bullsh*t.”

“Lee Ming! I know you’re watching livestream, go buy some supper for me. Fried noodles, no chili, thanks!”

“Fu San Mental Hospital Room 31, subbing to the host! In support of our friend finding a new job!”

Several notices appeared on screen, and all of them showed disbelief at Chen Ge’s promise. The man wasn’t fazed. “I don’t mind if you think I’m crazy because you’ll soon see how wrong you all are.”

The viewership continued to climb. Chen Ge turned to look at the night sky that was darkening. He lit a cigarette and started explaining the bloody history of Fu An Apartments to his viewers.