

Horrors 211

Chapter 211: Scary Mannequins

Along the way, Chen Ge called the workshop boss. The boss thought that Chen Ge had changed her mind and was willing to help the poor souls in the world. Without waiting for Chen Ge to explain, he left his home in a hurry. Chen Ge waited at the front door of the workshop while having his breakfast. In just twenty minutes, the boss arrived.

"Boss Qian, I need to borrow your workshop again. Money is not an issue." Chen Ge was not exactly lying. He might not have money now, but he would have it soon.

"Why are we talking money at the first meeting? We're old pals already. Talk of money hurts the relationship." The slightly overweight boss sat next to Chen Ge. "Just leave me one of your mannequins, and it'll be fine."

"Are you sure? My mannequins are not for human use." Chen Ge did not want to lie to the boss since he had treated him with nothing but kindness. "I will design a few new mannequins today. You can decide after I'm done."

The boss opened the glass door, but before entering, he bowed three times.

"What are you doing? Are you that afraid?" Chen Ge remembered that the boss did not have this habit when they first met.

"I also don't know why. Ever since you created your first batch of mannequins, I've had a feeling something is watching me from inside the door." Boss Qian scratched his head. "In any case, it's no loss on my part to be careful. If there's really something, this way perhaps it might leave me alone."

"You're not wrong." Chen Ge shook his head as he entered the workshop. Now he appeared to be more familiar with the layout than Boss Qian. He picked up the tools that he needed and walked into the storage room. "Some of your materials are going to expire if you don't use them soon. Speaking of which, the place looks the same as when I left the last time. Have you had no business during this whole period?"

"It's okay." Boss Qian walked into the storage room to help and used this opportunity to say, "I've just came back from the adult doll market research. The market is booming, and we can go the custom-made route."

"We can talk about that later." Chen Ge brushed him off. With all the materials ready, Chen Ge tried to remember the woman's face that had gone under the knife many times. In a few minutes, he had completed a broad draft.

"Running a Haunted House is a real waste of your talent." Boss Qian sighed. Chen Ge ignored him and focused on the clay. Very soon, he completed the woman's face. The woman might have been insane, but it had to be said that she was incredibly beautiful.

"But something is missing." Chen Ge held the model for inspection before ruining it.

“Don’t!” Boss Qian cried out. “At least give it to me to show the customer!”

“The face is not what I want,” Chen Ge mumbled and soon came up with another face. Compared to before, this face was filled with sickness and madness. “Still wrong, the woman’s madness is laced with pain.”

Chen Ge started over again. Then Chen Ge felt the face was missing a brilliance. This was repeated several times until Boss Qian had gotten used to it. He looked at Chen Ge with sadness in his eyes, and he was humming a sad ballad.

“Where is the problem?” Chen Ge thought back to the introduction of his Dollmaker’s talent, and a brave idea appeared in his mind. “The woman’s lingering spirit was trapped by Xu Yin inside the tape. I can use Xu Yin’s power to release the lingering spirit to control the mannequin. The madwoman is still alive, and in the phone, living doll has this introduction—using a live person as basis. If I follow the black phone’s introduction and instill the madwoman’s lingering spirit into the mannequin, what will happen?”

Looking at the clay body in his hands, Chen Ge could only envision this. The woman had been involved in multiple murders. Even if she played the mad card, it was impossible for her to see the light of day again.

“Looks like I still need to depend on myself.” To reconstruct the woman’s face, Chen Ge continued to work. “She has been through many plastic surgeries. Her face is indeed gorgeous if you look at the facial feature individually, but once combined together, there’s this uncanny feeling.”

Chen Ge tore the woman’s apart and focused on making individual features before joining them together. When Chen Ge patched the last piece of the face together, a miracle appeared. The woman’s face was replicated perfectly; even the expression was hauntingly similar. Looking at this face, Chen Ge was finally satisfied.

“The features are made individually and joined together using steel wires. This way, the face won’t be broken so easily.”

However, that did not mean that the face would not break open. If a visitor got too close, the woman’s face could still crack. Chen Ge chuckled, imagining the scare that would have on people.

Before 9 am, Chen Ge completed five mannequins, based on the madwoman, Xu Tong, Xiong Qing, the single-armed patient, and the resilient nurse. If possible, Chen Ge wanted to copy the entire Third Sick Hall, including all the patients and doctors.

“Now that I have the characters. With the corresponding props, each mannequin will be their own scary tale.”

It needed time for the filler to freeze, so Chen Ge left after bidding Boss Qian farewell.

Chen Ge reached the Haunted House at 9 am. He opened the gate to welcome a new day of work. New Century Park opened at 9 am. Many visitors stepped into the park and made a beeline for Chen Ge’s Haunted House. The number was not small either.

Uncle Xu did not miss this. From certain angle, Chen Ge's Haunted House had become the park's main attraction.

"Uncle Xu, you're here. This is perfect; I was just looking for you."

"Want me to help you sell tickets? Sure, I'm free anyway." Uncle Xu naturally moved to the door of the Haunted House. Looking at the long line of visitors, a rare smile appeared on his face.

Chen Ge waved. "I want to build a rest stop next to the Haunted House. It's horrible that we ask the visitors to stand in line all day."

"No problem. Director Luo has specifically ordered us to aid you in the next two months."

"I still feel like it's better if I go talk to Director Luo in person." Chen Ge was preparing for the future. He had more things in mind than a mere rest stop.

"Director Luo will be in his office around noon, so you can go see him then." Uncle Xu gave the other workers their assignments through his walkie-talkie. Soon, the park's van arrived, and several workers helped move the benches and shed covers out from the vehicle. They were going to build a simple shed beside the Haunted House.

"These were from when the park still had activities; we'll use them for now. As for the actual rest stop, the size and everything, you will need to discuss it with Director Luo first."

"Understood."

Uncle Xu and the park workers helped maintain the line. Most of them were lining up obediently, but a large young man cut through the line, rushing toward Chen Ge.

"Wang Hailong? Why is he here?" Chen Ge walked forward assuming some accident had happened to Wang Shenglong. "Did the child finally lose his patience and speak?"

Chapter 212: As Kind as the Sun

Stopping the worker, Chen Ge went forward. "Are you looking for me?"

Wang Shenglong was covered with sweat, and he gasped for breath as he pushed through the crowd. "My little brother spoke last night! He's just outside the park; he says that he has something important to tell you!"

"Bring me to him." Things were as Chen Ge expected. He looked at the long lines and gave Uncle Xu some simple commands. He opened the Minghun scenario to the visitors before leaving with Wang Hailong.

"I'm sorry to disturb your business." Wang Hailing swiped the sweat from his forehead. "Life has been really difficult for Shenglong, and I couldn't say no to him."

"I understand."

The two of them reached the entrance of the park. There was a van parked across the street, and the outside of the van was painted with a logo that read 'Long Hu Fang'.

"In here." Wang Hailong led Chen Ge toward the van. "You've seen how my brother looks. He's afraid of scaring others, so he didn't want to show himself in public."

Tussling with the thin monster meant that Wang Shenglong's mental age had not grown; he was no different from a child, but his body was seriously twisted. He stayed inside his room for most of the time, and he was so fat that he could not get on a bed, so he had to lie on the floor with a thin layer of mattress.

Chen Ge was reminded of the famous Disney movie—The Hunchback of Notre Dame.

When Chen Ge first met Wang Shenglong at Hai Ming Apartments, he had drawn a picture. Inside the picture, the monster had been standing on the boy's shoulders, its eyes targeting the people around him like he was ready to jump on other people's shoulders at any moment.

Wang Shenglong used that picture to tell Chen Ge of his difficulty. If he did not follow the monster's instructions, it would jump to his other family members, harming them. Thus, he had taken on the suffering all by himself, playing this unfair game. He had not said a word for the past five or six years.

Wang Hailong opened the back of the van to reveal a mountain like shadow at the deepest recesses of the van. "Shenglong, I've invited Boss Chen. If you have something to say, please tell him now."

Hearing that, the shadow moved forward slightly, causing the whole van to shake.

"Don't move, I'll come in." Chen Ge and Wang Hailong jumped into the van and closed the door. This was the second time he had been in such close contact with Wang Shenglong. It was impossible to tell Wang Shenglong's age from his looks. His face was covered by folds of fat, and his body was impossibly wide.

"Wu..." The years of non-speech meant that Wang Shenglong had forgotten how to speak. He could only formulate the start of the word but not the complete term.

"Don't worry. You can write the things that you want to tell me down." Chen Ge had initially maintained a distance from Wang Shenglong. He had stood near the door, and if there had been something amiss, he would have jumped out immediately. However, after some observation, Chen Ge realized that Wang Shenglong was indeed different from before. The most obvious difference being that the stench around him had already disappeared. He grabbed the notebook from the seat next to him. Wang Shenglong held the pen and wrote down two words on the paper.

"I won."

It was two simple words, but it took Wang Shenglong five to six years to complete them. It was because of these two words that his life had been ruined. The pen almost scratched through the paper; it was obvious how excited Wang Shenglong was feeling.

"Boss Chen, do you still remember the story I told you?" Afraid that Chen Ge did not get the reference, Wang Hailong leaned toward him. "My little brother got into this game with a monster when he was

young called 'Who Speaks First'. This game lasted for almost six years, but from the looks of thing, my little brother has won."

Then, Wang Hailong added in a whisper, "Boss Chen, my little brother just recovered, so please go along with everything that he says."

Chen Ge turned to glance at Wang Hailong. This large man was gentler than Chen Ge had expected.

"Your little brother is indeed impressive. I've met many who played this game, and your little brother is the only one who has won it." Chen Ge held Wang Shenglong's large hand. "You're amazing."

The pen moved, and Wang Shenglong added on the notebook, "It had only left temporarily. It said that it would return to find me."

"It will return?" Looking at the words, a question surfaced in Chen Ge's mind. "The monster has wasted almost six years on you, why did he suddenly leave?"

"It felt so threatened that it woke up from its slumber. It tried to forcibly take over my body, but it failed. Then, it left."

"Threatened? Is it because the appearance of Doctor Gao and myself?" Chen Ge pressed. "When did the monster awaken?"

"At 3 am two days ago," Wang Shenglong answered on the notebook honestly. Looking at the date on the paper, Chen Ge was shocked.

Two nights ago, he had been livestreaming inside Third Sick Hall. *After I entered the world behind the door and awakened Men Nan's main persona, it also woke up the slumbering monster?*

Chen Ge thought about it. He was almost certain that the two were linked, but that should not be the main reason.

"That night, when the monster left, did you see or hear anything out of place?"

"There was the sound of people walking backwards in the corridor."

"Walking backwards?"

Wang Shenglong wrote a lot of stuff on the paper, but Chen Ge still failed to understand him. This caused Wang Shenglong to start sweating profusely.

"It's alright. That's already a good enough clue." Chen Ge did not understand the difference between people walking forward and walking backwards. Before the Wang brothers, Chen Ge called Captain Yan.

"Captain Yan, I just received new information about the Third Sick Hall. The escaped patient might have appeared at Hai Ming Apartments recently." The monster on Wang Shenglong had come out the door in the Third Sick Hall. Instead of sticking around the other monsters, it had left the place's control. To be able to scare the monster, it was probably the appearance of the other monsters from the Third Sick Hall.

The monsters had to possess living humans if they want to stay outside for a prolonged period of time. Therefore, the backwards footsteps that Wang Shenglong heard that night were probably the result of one of the patients from Third Sick Hall.

Watching the conversation between Chen Ge and Wang Shenglong, Wang Hailong thought Chen Ge was just humoring his little brother, but he panicked when Chen Ge called the police. "What's happening? Why did you call the police?"

He suddenly realized the gravity of the situation, and he realized that Chen Ge was not kidding.

"Boss Chen, what have you been talking about? The police are coming to Hai Ming Apartments?" Wang Hailong's face was filled with worry.

"Your brother's story is related to another case; that's all I can tell you." Chen Ge chatted some more with Wang Shenglong before leaving the van.

Wang Hailong chased after him because he was worried. "Boss Chen, my brother has spent his whole life inside the house; he hasn't done anything illegal."

"That I know. To be precise, the case is related to the monster inside your brother's story."

"The monster?" Wang Hailong's face shifted. After a long time, he asked, "Will my brother be affected? He has suffered too much, and it took him so much time to be ready to speak."

"Don't worry, it won't affect your brother." Chen Ge looked inside the van. Wang Shenglong, who was like a small mountain, sat in the corner. He hid in the shadows where the sun would not hit. He gripped the pen in his hands, and it looked like he was drawing.

Chapter 213: Boss Chen

"Boss Chen, tell me the truth, what is going on with my brother? Will he relapse?" The vaguer Chen Ge was, the more unsettled Wang Hailong felt.

"I don't think it will repeat because it wasn't a sickness." Chen Ge tried to make Wang Hailong calm down. "Don't think too much of it. The most important thing you need to do now is assimilate Shenglong into a normal life."

Wang Hailong still wanted to say something more, but he was interrupted by Chen Ge. "Your little brother has been cut off from the outside world for a long time; he seems to have gotten used to closing himself up. This is not helpful if he wants to return to a normal life. If possible, you should bring him out some more."

Chen Ge pitied Wang Shenglong's condition. He was an innocent boy but ended up like this. Afraid of scaring others with his looks, he felt he had to hide in the corner of the van.

"I've discussed that with our father, but how can we bring Shenglong out in his condition? If people start pointing at him, won't that just make things worse?" Wang Hailong also worried about this. Even though the thin monster had left, the trauma it left on the boy would take a long time to undo.

“Didn’t I introduce you to a psychologist last time? He might be able to help with these problems.” Looking at the silent Wang Shenglong hiding in the corner, Chen Ge did not feel that well either. “There needs to be a process for him to get reconnected with the world. If you need my help, don’t be afraid to ask.”

He turned to leave. With regards to how to help Wang Shenglong return to a normal life, Chen Ge had an immature idea in his mind. *The child looks scary on the surface but has a gentle heart. If there is nowhere else for him to go, perhaps he can come help me at the Haunted House. Xu Wan is too small to make people think she’s a murderer. Wang Shenglong’s size is more in line with what the visitors think a murderer look like.*

When he returned to the Haunted House, the shed was a third ready. All the benches had been arranged. To experience the Haunted House, many visitors chose to sit on the benches rather than visit other attractions.

“Xiao Chen, your Haunted House is truly popular.” Uncle Xu was impressed. “I heard a few foreigners talking among themselves about how they rode on a train for several hours just to come visit your Haunted House. Now that you have the fame, it’s time to focus on the management to bring visitors the best terror experience. If they’re impressed, every single one of them will become free promotion for the Haunted House.”

Chen Ge had a plan of his own. Terror was the most intense of all human emotions. After one experienced something scary, ninety percent of them would share it with someone else, and this would indirectly help promote his Haunted House. Sometimes, they might conclude their whole experience with one, “It’s scary”, but that was possibly the highest praise for a Haunted House.

Chen Ge entered the Murder by Midnight scenario to act as the murderer while Xu Wan stayed in the Minghun scenario to play the bride. About three hours later, many visitors survived these two scenarios. Some already got their fill while others wanted to challenge Mu Yang High School after resting.

Afraid that an accident might happen inside Mu Yang High School, he would trail after them from a distance wearing Doctor Skull-cracker’s outfit. The whole morning passed, and the highest record was a group of six locating fourteen nametags in twenty-five minutes.

After entering Mu Yang High School, many visitors realized how different this scenario was from the others, and they escaped for their lives. The underground was not locked with a steel door, so they could exit any time they wanted. However, if they regretted that decision and wanted to try again, they would have to line up once more.

Is the goal of twenty nametags too difficult? Chen Ge thought about it. Everything he did, he did to bring the visitors a better service. *The mannequins consumed the visitors’ fear and screams, so they appear to be more alive. With how things are going, I doubt anyone will enter the Third Sick Hall this week.*

After giving it some consideration, Chen Ge reduced the clear requirement to sixteen nametags, but even so, there were no successes. “These visitors are too cowardly. Now I kinda miss those medical students.”

Chen Ge pulled the gates shut and helped Xu Wan remove her make-up.

"You miss them, but they might not miss you." Uncle Xu stood outside the door, counting the tickets. "Things had been going well these past few days. Keep it up. Don't make the visitors faint or vomit again. You'll just give me more scares by doing that."

"Don't worry, I'll try to keep that under control." Chen Ge just said that when his phone rang. He lowered his head and saw that the caller was He San. "The boy is calling at a time like this, is this a sign from above?"

Sitting on the steps, Chen Ge answered it. "Boss! The proprietor from Tian Teng Medical Schools wants your phone number, can I give it to him?"

"Wants my number?"

"Yes, after you left that day, it was chaos outside the Tian Teng Medical School. The visitors were split into two camps; one said that Tian Teng Medical School's name was unfounded and demanded a refund because they wanted to go to your Haunted House. The other half were Tian Teng Haunted House's loyal fans. They said that it was normal for you not to be afraid because you own a Haunted House yourself."

"Wait, what does all that got to do with the proprietor wanting my phone number?"

"Of course, it has everything to do with it! To not disappoint his own fans, the proprietor was forced to promise that he would come to visit your Haunted House to prove that owners of Haunted Houses would not be scared in other people's Haunted Houses," He San said on the phone. Chen Ge had a feeling that his wicked streak had rubbed off on the young man because he sounded really excited on the phone.

"They're ready to visit your Haunted House tomorrow morning, and they'll be bringing their own fans with them. Apparently, they want to record the whole process to face-slap those visitors who demanded a refund."

Chen Ge was rather speechless. "Are these mindless fans?"

"No idea, I'm just calling to warn you."

"Sure, give him my number. We're both in the same business; more communication is beneficial for both parties."

Not long after He San hung up, Chen Ge's phone rang again. This time, it was an unknown number.

"Hello?"

"Boss Chen, I'm the proprietor for Tian Teng Medical School. We met some time ago."

"Yes, how can I help you?"

"We're planning to visit your Haunted House tomorrow, and some of our fans will tag along. Hopefully, Boss Chen will be kind to us."

"Of course, you know I'm not the kind to hold grudges. My Haunted House is all for your visitation."

“Boss Chen sure is nice.” Tian Teng Medical School’s proprietor added in a hurry, “Then we’ll pick one that has intermediate difficulty, not too scary but also not too simple.”

Chapter 214: A Seven-Week Miracle

“Intermediate difficulty? No problem,” Chen Ge promised readily. He was going to invite them to try out Mu Yang High School. If they survived that, then Chen Ge would invite them to try the Third Sick Hall.

“Then, I shall thank you in advanced.” After hanging up, the proprietor was impressed by Chen Ge’s kindness. He thought the man was quite friendly and nice.

Chen Ge was rather happy that the people from Tian Teng Medical School were coming to visit. Ever since the introduction of the Third Sick Hall, no visitors had managed to challenge it, and it pained Chen Ge that he did not get to share the treasure with others. Since the workers from Tian Teng Medical School were coming, they might be able to challenge the Third Sick Hall because they were people who spent most of their time inside a Haunted House, and that meant they should be more courageous than normal visitors.

“The filler for the mannequin should be dry by now. I’ll go get them to decorate the Third Sick Hall tonight.” Chen Ge planned to employ what he had learned from Tian Teng Medical School inside his own Haunted House and then use the workers from Tian Teng Medical School to try it out. During lunch, Chen Ge took his own design proposal to the office building. “Director Luo, I have a proposal that I want you to see.”

Director Luo was facing the laptop in his room, and his brows were creased deeply. When he saw Chen Ge, the expression on his face lightened slightly. “If you need anything, ask Ol’ Xu. I’ve already told him to cooperate with you fully.”

“He can’t make the call on this.” Chen Ge placed the document that he had spent the whole night writing on the desk. “I wish to build a multi-purpose hall next to the Haunted House. I have great plans for the future, so the building will be quite big.”

Director Luo looked at Chen Ge’s proposal twice before putting it down. “The park now is facing financial issues; it’s already difficult keeping the place running normally. We do not have the budget to invest in more attractions.”

“Director Luo, this multi-purpose building will serve us well; I have full faith in that. An eatery will be able to provide the visitors a better environment to recover. Limited mementos to commemorate the different scenarios they have cleared will entice visitors to go try out new scenarios.”

“I know you have confidence and I believe in your ability, but certain things need to be inspected from the bigger picture.” Director Luo turned the laptop to face Chen Ge. “This is a promo video for the futuristic theme park at Eastern Jiujiang. Take a look at this first before you comment.”

Director Luo clicked on the button, and a large whale jumped out from the surface of the sea, splashing water everywhere. As the whale submerged back underwater, the video took the viewers to an underwater world following the whale. Many fish and water creatures filled up the screen. There was even a ghost ship travelling underwater.

The angle changed, and it felt like the video was taken on the deck of the ghost ship. Under the deep sea, the ship neared an underwater trench, and the ship narrowly escaped the explosion of an underwater volcano.

“This is one of the attractions provided by the park; it’s called ‘20,000 Miles Underwater’.” Director Luo probably had his own channel to acquire this video. “Tell me, what do you think?”

Chen Ge understood why Director Luo was looking so glum earlier. The video had given him plenty of awe and shock, so he could only imagine how exciting it would be if he was on the cruise himself.

“The competition is strong, but that doesn’t mean we have no chance.” Chen Ge sat down on the sofa. He would not give up not until the last minute.

“Keep on watching.” Hearing his answer, Director Luo did not get mad. In fact, his expression softened even more. The remaining part of the video featured a futuristic city with skyscrapers, flying cars, and various robots keeping the whole city running. Visitors could be seen sitting inside a capsule-like vehicle as they explored the city.

“This is the other main feature of the park—Virtual City. The visitors will be given 3D glasses to experience life in the future inside this virtual city.” Director Luo closed the video and looked at Chen Ge. “Are you amazed? Actually, several years ago, I anticipated this day. A third-generation theme park that depends on actual rides will eventually be replaced by a larger, 4th generation theme park with a futuristic theme.”

“Director Luo, what we saw were promo videos. Current technology is not advanced enough to create the scenes we saw in the video,” Chen Ge countered. “Most video games show incredible effects in their promotional videos, but the finished product is often different from advertised.”

“They don’t need to replicate it a hundred percent. Even if the actual park is thirty percent as shown in the video, it will get enough visitors interested to visit it.” Director Luo walked to stand before the window. “New Century Park was built at the beginning of this century. Over ten years have passed since then. It has enjoyed its prime, but now it is reaching its end. Probably starting from next week, the whole of Jiujiang, perhaps even our own district, will be filled with advertisements for the futuristic park, and it’ll only get more difficult for us.”

“Director Luo, how long do we have until the park’s official opening?”

“Less than two months, to be precise only seven weeks.”

“It’s a bit rushed, but we still have a fighting chance. Perhaps there might be a miracle at the end.” Chen Ge stood up to leave. The promotional period for the futuristic park had given him plenty of pressure.

“Don’t hurry to leave. I have something to tell you, and I hope you’re ready.” Director Luo returned to the table and clicked open a report on the laptop.

Chen Ge stopped. “What is it?”

“I had Ol’ Xu came up with a report about the visitors who came to the park for the recent week. 35 percent were coming just for your Haunted House, and the number is still growing.” Director Luo did not

hide anything from Chen Ge. “Now, your Haunted House is the feature of this park. This kinda reminds me of how it was when your parents first came to New Century Park.”

“It’s mainly because everyone is being too kind to me.”

“Don’t be too humble, this is the result of your hard work.” Director Luo looked at the data and analyzed, “Your Haunted House is the main reason the park even has visitors. Many people come to the park solely for your Haunted House, and I believe the number might be larger if not for the high admission price to come into the park. After all, they’re only here for the Haunted House and have no interest in the other attractions.”

Chen Ge listened quietly. He realized that Director Luo might want to tell him something very important.

“Compared to the futuristic park, we have zero competition power, so the only thing we can do is lower the admission price to attract more visitors. Initially, we planned to do this in two months’ time, but considering the rising popularity of your Haunted House, we decided to move it forward,” Director Luo announced. “The admission price to the park will be decreased, but the ticket price to your Haunted House has to be raised. How much the number will be moved, we’re discussing, and I’m just preparing you for this by telling you now.”

Chapter 215: The Second Apparel

After exiting Director Luo’s office, Chen Ge had a quick lunch before throwing himself back into work. He worked until 6:30 pm, and while most of the attractions at the park had already stopped working, the crowd outside of the Haunted House was still quite large.

Many visitors sat at the tent to communicate with each other. The few who survived Mu Yang High School became celebrities of sorts. The other visitors wanted to know what a two-star scenario was like, but they did not dare challenge it themselves.

Those who survived Mu Yang High School had pale faces dripping with cold sweat. However, they refused to admit that they were scared, so they exaggerated the fear factor of Mu Yang High School, making those who had not challenged it even more curious.

After a long discussion, the group of visitors joined together to form a massive team, specifically to challenge the Haunted House. They jotted down the detailed location of each discovered nametag and it had a professional flair to it. After closing for the day, Chen Ge went out and discovered what the visitors were doing. Looking at how excited they were, Chen Ge was glad.

“Hopefully they can find all sixteen nametags soon; the Third Sick Hall has been vacant for too long.”

After cleaning the Haunted House, Chen Ge rushed to Boss Qian’s workshop. Inside the underground workshop, Boss Qian had moved a chair to sit next to the front door. When Chen Ge arrived, he saw the man looking at the mannequins.

“Boss Qian, I’m here for the mannequins.” Chen Ge patted Boss Qian on his shoulder and the latter jumped from shock.

“When did you arrive?”

“Just now. What’s wrong with you? You’re so distracted.” Chen Ge walked into the workshop to add the finishing touches to the mannequins. Boss Qian stood beside him, staring at the mannequins wordlessly.

Sensing Boss Qian’s strange behavior, Chen Ge asked probingly, “Is it because you ran into something strange today?”

Boss Qian’s brow raised like someone had exposed the deepest secret inside his heart. “How did you know?”

“You were quite obvious about it.”

“Since you’ve found out, then I have no reason to hide from you anymore.” Boss Qian sidled to Chen Ge and said mysteriously, “Actually, I have Yin Yang Vision, and I can see things that others can’t.”

“Yin Yang Vision?” Chen Ge turned to give Boss Qian a once-over. “Have you been watching too many scary movies?”

“It’s real. When I was young, a monk once told me that I came from a line of royalty, and I was even named Qian Guigen because my father believed the monk,” Boss Qian explained.

“If you came from royalty, why are you in such a state?”

“Perhaps my opportunity hasn’t arrived yet.” Boss Qian shook his head. “Anyway, that’s not important—the important thing is that I saw something unbelievable today.”

“Well, what is it?”

Boss Qian got close to Chen Ge and said in a whispered tone, “About four hours ago, this female mannequin winked at me.”

He even used his hand to cover half of his lips like he was afraid the mannequin might overhear him.

“That’s all? But why is it the female mannequin and not the male one?”

“Boss, the mannequin blinked! Can you focus on the main point of the problem?” Boss Qian gripped Chen Ge’s arm. “I’m not lying to you!”

“I didn’t say you were, did I?”

“But you didn’t react when I told you I have Yin Yang Vision and saw the mannequin blink!”

“I hear Yin Yang Vision is quite amazing. Does this mean you don’t need to wear 3D glasses when you got to watch 3D movies?”

Boss Qian’s mouth fell open. He thought long and hard about it before finally squeezing out, “No.”

“From how I see it, you’re probably too tired. Go back home and get a good rest. We still have plenty of chance to work together in the future.” Chen Ge used a white cloth to cover up the few mannequins and moved them out of the underground workshop.

“Was I really imagining things?” Boss Qian started to doubt himself.

“Don’t worry. Call me if anything happens.” Chen Ge patted his chest to reassure Boss Qian. Then, he called a taxi and prepared to leave.

The more Boss Qian thought about what Chen Ge had said, the more unsettled he felt. *Normally, when one tries to console others, they would say, ‘Don’t worry, nothing will happen.’ So, why did Boss Chen tell me to call him if something happens?*

After Chen Ge hauled the mannequins back into the staff breakroom, his expression turned serious. He placed the white cat around the mannequins. After several seconds, the white cat jumped onto the female mannequin’s body. Using its claws, it toyed with the mannequin’s hair like it was toying with a mouse.

“So there is really something.” Chen Ge had not expected this. The mannequin that was created using the madwoman as a basis turned out to be different than others. Chen Ge placed the cleaver on the female mannequin’s neck. “I’m your creator, so you’re my responsibility. Hopefully, you’ll listen to my orders and quietly move into your new home.”

Chen Ge’s pupils narrowed, and he could sense emotions like fear and anxiety from the mannequin. He thought about it before retracting the cleaver. “I’m just trying to scare you. In reality, I’m a real softie; I’ll never harm any of you on purpose.”

Chen Ge opened the door to the underground parking lot and deposited the mannequins inside the Third Sick Hall. “Welcome, this will be your new home in the future.”

He placed the four mannequins in different areas, and using his own ideas, he came up with several mechanisms. He only finished working when the clock struck twelve. Chen Ge returned to the staff breakroom. Lying in bed, fatigue washed over him. Chen Ge had not rested throughout the day.

Chen Ge pulled out the black phone to glance at the daily missions. When the tent was constructed outside the Haunted House, the message alert that he had finished the mission was received.

“Congratulations, Specter’s Favored, you have completed a normal mission. Terror requires a corresponding buffer period. Considerate service will leave a good impression on the visitors. You’ve earned the mission reward—The Uniform of the Faceless Nurse!

“Uniform of the Faceless Nurse (Prop Apparel): Jennie is the wife of Doctor Skull-cracker, Clark. That night, she saw her husband entering the sickroom with the iron mallet. She had no idea what her beloved husband was up to. It was not until the hammer came right at her face that she realized what was happening.”

A Skull-cracker doctor and Faceless Nurse, this is quite a scary story.

Chen Ge switched off the phone and turned to sleep. When he woke up early the next morning, he entered the dressing room, and inside the wooden box where he found Doctor Skull-cracker’s outfit last time, there was a blood-drenched nurse’s outfit.

This is too small for a male mannequin, but it should fit the female mannequin nicely.

Chen Ge took a tour around the Third Sick Hall. After he made sure that there were no hidden security threats, he opened the Haunted House’s gate to prepare for business.

Chapter 216: I Have a Bad Feeling

"Boss, you're looking swell this morning." When Xu Wan arrived, she saw Chen Ge arguing with the white cat, which was perched at the top of the tree. Instead of being surprised, she found this to be quite normal.

"Xiao Wan, go and put on your make-up first. Today, the people from Tian Teng Medical School will be visiting us for a cross-study. You're my only presentable worker, so I'll be counting on you today!"

"Okay." Xu Wan pointed at the white cat munching on Chen Ge's jacket. "Do you need my help?"

"It's alright. I can handle a mere cat."

Long story short, when Chen Ge woke up that morning, he had realized that there was still time for laundry, so he had collected the dirty clothes that needed washing. While he was not paying attention, the white cat had dragged the jacket in which the kittens had once been wrapped up in to the tree. "I'm not going to wash that jacket! Please come down!"

New Century Park opened at 9 am, and it was quite obvious that almost half of them headed directly to the Haunted House. "Today's visitors are even more numerous than yesterday."

Chen Ge's Haunted House was by far the most popular attraction.

"Boss Chen!" There was a small group of familiar faces at the front of the crowd. When Chen Ge saw them, his face lit up. Seeing Chen Ge's smile, the proprietor from Tian Teng Medical School shivered involuntarily. He lowered his head and coughed. "We came with a few friends from within the circle, and everyone wishes to visit your Haunted House."

The proprietor winked at Chen Ge, and the inherent meaning was quite clear. They came with their fans and friends, so hopefully, Chen Ge could save them some face. "Friends from within the circle?"

Chen Ge looked behind them and discovered the weird atmosphere. Other than the few actors from Tian Teng Medical School, the rest of them did not seem like they were there to play.

"Let me make some introductions. This is Han Qiuming, our district's best Haunted House designer. He has worked with many international teams and is the brain behind Tian Teng Medical School. When you visited us, Mr. Han was overseas." The proprietor leaned sideways to show a tall, thin man with thick spectacles. The man's attitude was cold.

"The short-haired girl next to Mr. Han is Ye Xiaoxin. She's a famous online blogger with more than 600,000 followers. Her focus is reviewing Haunted Houses, and she has reviewed more than fifty Haunted Houses throughout the country." The proprietor's face froze. "When she heard about you, she reached out to me because she was curious and stated her wish to come along."

"Nice to meet you." The girl looked like she was only slightly over twenty and had very fair skin. She was about 1.74 meters tall, and her long pair of legs grabbed everyone's attention. Her style was very unisexual. With cropped hair, she looked as handsome as a young man. This kind of girl going into a Haunted House alone would be entertaining, so it was no wonder she had a huge following online.

“Boss Qian, don’t underestimate her.” The proprietor seemed to have suffered at the hands of the young woman before. “She has a high tolerance for fear. When she first entered Tian Teng Medical School, she played some nasty prank on our workers. Unfortunately, she was very bad with directions and requested us to lead her out after she wandered about the Haunted House for a full forty minutes.”

“That’s wonderful. I admire people with big hearts.” Many female visitors said that they were not afraid before entering the Haunted House, like the initial Gao Ru Xue. Chen Ge smiled kindly on the surface, but internally, he wondered if his Haunted House had scared this type of female visitor before.

“Oh well. If you’re fine with it, then alright.” Tian Teng Medical School’s proprietor saw how unfazed Chen Ge was, so he waved and said, “Come over here, we should be preparing to enter the Haunted House now.”

Three more people departed from the crowd, two boys and one girl. The girl looked familiar to Chen Ge. He remembered seeing her in the line when he visited Tian Teng Medical School. She had a cute face, very girl next door.

She walked forward to greet Chen Ge. “Do you still remember me? We met each other in the elevator at Tian Teng Medical School. My name is Su Luoluo.”

“Luoluo is a Haunted House aficionado, and most of us know her. The main reason she’s here is because of a lucky draw. She was chosen to experience your Haunted House with us,” the proprietor explained awkwardly. He could not bring himself to say the truth. His own workers had refused to come along, and since there were not enough people, he had to come up with this fan service, a “lucky draw”.

“Is that so? Then she sure is ‘lucky’.” The sun hit on Chen Ge’s face, and his smile was like a spring breeze, calming and soothing. Su Luoluo looked at him before lowering her face embarrassedly.

“You’ve met the other two. They’re the workers from my Haunted House.” The proprietor pointed at the two men who stood at the back. “The large one is Song An; he was the security ghost. The smaller one is Du Chaojin; he was the one hiding inside the steel box.”

Since Song An was not ‘attacked’ by Chen Ge, he came forth and greeted Chen Ge politely. However, Du Chaojin reacted differently. He had been hiding inside the steel box to scare Chen Ge, but he had instead been shocked by the ‘Wedding Dress’ tune that suddenly appeared behind him. To make matters worse, Boss Chen moved to block the front of the box, so he could not escape even if he wanted to. He had screamed and yelled before being allowed to crawl out of the steel box with half of his soul gone.

Meeting his ‘nemesis’ again, his face turned paler and paler. Chen Ge walked to Du Chaojin and was surprised. The young man was at most eighteen, and he was incredibly thin and youthful. He was probably working at Tian Teng Medical School part-time. “Without the make-up, I barely recognized you. Who would have thought you’re the patient who was yelling so desperately to get out from the box?”

Before Xiao Du exploded, the proprietor pulled Chen Ge aside swiftly. “Boss Chen, six of us are visiting at the same time, so we’ll depend on your arrangement.”

The proprietor stood facing away from the other guests and kept winking at Chen Ge. Chen Ge understood what he was getting at. “Currently, my Haunted House has four themed scenarios. Minghun,

Murder by Midnight, Mu Yang High School, and the newly added Third Sick Hall. The difficulty for Minghun and Murder by Midnight is just normal, and Third Sick Hall is the most difficult, so I suggest you take the moderately difficult Mu Yang High School.”

“Alright, we’ll visit that one.” The proprietor nodded, but the people behind him had things to say.

“Boss Chen sure is being unkind.” Han Qiuming pushed on his thick glasses. “Before we arrived, we asked around, and people told us your Haunted House’s most difficult scenario. The one that no one has solved to this day is Mu Yang High School. This is already the most difficult challenge, and you are trying to pass it off as moderately difficult? Isn’t that a bit too much?”

“I’m being unkind?”

“Are you afraid that letting us clear the most difficult scenario will make you lose face? That’s why you made up this scenario that is supposedly more difficult?” Han Qiuming smirked. “Designing a large themed scenario takes two to three months. Mu Yang High School has only been open for less than a week; where did you find time to design a new set?”

His thin lips continued to rise. “But no matter, the result will be the same. The reason we’re here today is to clear all of your scenarios!”

“Qiuming, don’t be silly. Boss Chen is not that kind of person.” The proprietor pulled on Han Qiuming’s arm. A bad feeling surfaced in his heart. Chen Ge listened to the man quietly and did not retort. Uncle Xu had once said, as a theme park worker, he should try his best to satisfy the visitors’ need.

He thought about it, and the smile returned to his face. “In that case, how about we start with the Third Sick Hall? If you can still manage to walk after that, we’ll go to Mu Yang High School.”

Chapter 217: Putting Visitors First

“Sure.” Han Qiuming patted the proprietor’s hand, telling him not to worry.

“Follow me.” Chen Ge did not give them the chance to reject. The proprietor stood where he was.

“Qiuming, you’ve acted too rashly.”

“We’re all in the same business. You should be able to tell whether he was lying or not.” Han Qiuming shrugged. “If you are that afraid, I’ll walk at the front.”

“You weren’t there that day; you don’t know about the situation.” The proprietor felt a headache coming. “This Boss Chen is not a normal individual. He entered the Haunted House alone and managed to maintain his heartrate below 100.”

“That’s not all,” Song An added. “That day, Zhenzhen’s spirit seemed to appear again. All of us actors ran out of the Haunted House for our lives, but he remained inside the Haunted House alone.”

“What is so scary about that? You people are just too cowardly.” Han Qiuming pushed the glasses up his nose. “If it was me, I would have stayed inside the Haunted House as well.”

"I'm not done." Song An shared a look with his boss. He continued when he got the latter's permission. "After Boss Chen left, we inspected the Haunted House closely. Guess what we found."

"Stop talking in riddles."

"The female body that hung at the entrance was decimated. The head was rolled to the side, and its eyes looking in a fixed direction. Both of its legs were torn apart and were deposited far away from the body." Just retelling it made Song An scared. "Would a normal visitor do something this crazy? I almost called the police then."

The proprietor also walked over. "After Boss Chen, I've learned something. Sometimes, people are scarier than ghosts."

"That's right." Song An nodded in agreement. "We should leave as soon as possible when the visitation is over. Our two Haunted Houses should stay as apart as possible in the future."

"Is that necessary? You're all acting like such babies. We're already here, and it's too late to be afraid now." Ye Xiaoxin swiped on her phone and turned back when she realized that the people from Tian Teng Medical School had not moved. "You're both in the same business, so how come the difference is so big?"

The young woman was a straight-shooter, and she had a unique tone. It sounded quite raspy and sexy. She walked toward the Haunted House and updated her status online. 'Trying out a new local Haunted House today.'

"See, we're looked down upon now." Han Qiuming's gaze swept the pair of long legs and rushed after Ye Xiaoxin without looking back.

"He's acting too rashly." The proprietor was worried. "Song An, stick close to him when we're in there. Qiuming is talented, but pride might be his biggest downfall."

"Okay, I'll try my best." Song An sighed as they walked into the Haunted House. The curtain was like a wall separating the two worlds. There was barely any light inside the Haunted House, and it was much cooler inside.

"This place looks quite old." Song An looked around. "Who would have thought Jiujiang still had a localized Haunted House of this scale?"

"The Haunted House was built by both my parents and the park five or six years ago. At the time, it was the park's main feature." Chen Ge pulled out the disclaimer notices to give his guests. "Sign these first before we move forward."

"Are you serious?" Han Qiuming looked at the long list of claims on the form before tossing it back on the table. "Save the paper. We're both operators of Haunted Houses. We know what you're getting into, so there's no need to make this so official."

The rest of Tian Teng Medical School did not move. They thought this was a trick by Chen Ge. The form itself was not useful, so the main purpose was its psychological pressure. On the other hand, Ye Xiaoxin and Su Luoluo signed the papers readily.

"I think there might be some misunderstanding. My papers are authorized by the government; they're stamped and sealed." Chen Ge placed the disclaimers beside the group. "There's no entry if you don't sign the form; that's the rule."

"Understood, understood." The proprietor signed his name—Guo Miao. The rest of them followed suit. Since everyone was doing it, Han Qiuming had to follow, but that did not stop him from grumbling. "Tsk, so much trouble to visit a Haunted House. Fine, let me see whether it's worth it or not."

Chen Ge ignored Han Qiuming as he put their forms aside. "The Third Sick Hall is a newly built scenario, so many places are not yet completed. If you come across things that you cannot handle, remember to find the security spots to call for help."

"Don't waste your breath. We're more familiar with the rules of a Haunted House than you are; we've tried more than twenty ways of introducing changes to the game for the past few years, so if anything, we're more professional than you are." Han Qiuming had never stopped harassing Chen Ge.

"In that case, I'll keep the explanation brief." Chen Ge did not get angry and maintained a good attitude. "The scenario that you're visiting is called the Third Sick Hall. This is a story where the patients took up the role of the doctors, and logic is twisted. The whole scenario is not entirely fake, and I have to warn you that some of the patients are still at large."

"Based on a real story? Isn't that a direct copy of our idea?" Han Qiuming continued to lambast Chen Ge as if he could not see the warning in the eyes of the proprietor. "I've visited more than a hundred Haunted House of various sizes both locally and overseas. There are Haunted Houses in western countries that are built directly on top of abandoned prisons. Compared to those, yours is still too green."

The proprietor finally rushed forward to say something. "Boss Chen, Qiuming is a bit direct with his words; he didn't mean anything by them."

"It's alright. In this business, I always put the customers first, and I will listen to all suggestions and ideas seriously."

Ye Xiaoxin took out a notebook from her pocket and wrote, "Great staff, + 5 points."

"You are...?" Chen Ge turned toward the young lady.

"I'm marking your Haunted House. Full score is 100. If you score above 80, I'll help you promote it on my blog." Ye Xiaoxin pocketed her notebook. "I know Haunted Houses don't allow phones, so I use this notebook to record everything I see."

"Very professional." Chen Ge wiped the sweat in his palm. "The Third Sick Hall is an open scenario, so feel free to explore the place. As long as you can bring out the tape recorder that I took from your Haunted House in twenty minutes, you will have cleared the scenario."

With kindness and sincerity, Chen Ge repeated, "Don't let your guard down. You have to retrieve the tape recorder from the Third Sick Hall in twenty minutes to win."

Chapter 218: Different From What I Thought

“So simple?” Han Qiuming and the few workers from Tian Teng Medical School were in disbelief. The tape recorder was quite huge, and it should not have been too hard to find.

“Boss Chen, you’re not kidding, right?” Ye Xiaoxin pulled out her notes. She had reviewed many Haunted Houses, and this was the first time she had come across such an interesting challenge.

“The tape recorder is from Tian Teng Medical School anyway, so I shall make use of this chance to return it to you.” Chen Ge locked the forms inside the cupboard. He had a feeling that he might need them soon.

“You’ve given up so early?” Han Qiuming seemed to be rather disappointed.

“This way please.” Chen Ge ignored him and led the group to the entrance of Night of the Living Dead.

“These props are from the beginning of the century, and it looks like they haven’t been maintained in the past month. The mannequins look like they were made by a child’s hand, and the props are allowed to stack over themselves in a giant mess. There’s no semblance of a plot. You want us to experience this kind of scenario? Are you trying to humiliate us?” Han Qiuming said wickedly. But at least the man was talented; he managed to pinpoint the issue with Night of the Living Dead with one glance.

Even Ye Xiaoxin and Su Luoluo felt the scenario was quite underwhelming. Listing the weaknesses of the scenario, Han Qiuming made to enter the scenario, but he was stopped by the proprietor, Guo Miao.

“O’ Gao, why are you stopping me?” The man shook his head. His heart was racing, and he had a bad feeling. “The atmosphere inside this place is very weird.”

“What is so weird about it?”

“I can’t really tell, but it is different from a normal room.” Gao Miao sucked in a cold breath. “When I went to inspect the hospital where Xu Zhenzhen had her incident, this was the feeling that I felt. My heart was all flustered even though it was broad daylight, and I ran out after a five-minute tour.”

“Don’t scare yourself for no reason.” Han Qiuming flung the man’s arm away and walked into Night of the Living Dead.

“I abandoned this scenario quite some time ago. Due to certain reasons, I had not had the time to remove it.” Chen Ge looked at Han Qiuming, and he was reminded of Fei Youliang. He had a feeling that Fei Youliang would not be so alone at the hospital after Mr. Han finished his tour.

Pulling up the wooden board, a draft of cold air surged forward. Chen Ge’s gaze scanned the group of visitors and pointed down the darkened stairs. “The Third Sick Hall you’re visiting is down there.”

“Underground?”

The group of visitors crowded around the entrance. Looking at the staircase that seemed to lead into endless darkness, a curious feeling formed in their hearts. Unfinished test papers settled on the charred steps, and a faded stench filled the air. It was not obvious, but it was enough to implant some horrible ideas in the visitors’ minds.

“The left side leads to Mu Yang High School, and the right side leads to Third Sick Hall. The two scenarios are connected, so make sure you go in the right direction.” Chen Ge gave a few final warnings. “The two scenarios are incredibly big, so I advise you all stick together.”

After explaining everything, Chen Ge took out his phone. “Find the recorder in twenty minutes and bring it out. The game will be over.”

The group of visitors did not move. It was unknown who pushed Han Qiuming from the back, but he staggered forward.

“You don’t have the time to waste.” With Chen Ge’s urging, the visitors took the stairs down into the basement. When the last of them disappeared into the darkness, Chen Ge picked up the wooden boards and waved at them. “Have fun.”

After closing the boards, Chen Ge went back to the main control room, but he faced a difficulty when choosing the background music. He rarely used Wedding Dress and Black Friday for his normal visitors. At most, he mixed them in between normal music as a hidden surprise of sort.

“Han Qiuming is a Haunted House designer. He managed to pinpoint the various weaknesses with Night of the Living Dead with just one glance, so he is more than just a mouth. The workers from Tian Teng Medical School are used to the atmosphere inside the Haunted House, so normal scares won’t work on them. Ye Xiaoxin is a professional Haunted House reviewer, so she naturally has a strong heart. Only Su Luoluo is the innocent victim who has been dragged into the mud by the proprietor.”

Since the visitors were all professionals, being too nice would be a sign of disrespect. His hand on the mouse, Chen Ge teetered between the two music tracks. “Which is more suitable? Oh well, only a child will pick one. Since we’re all adults, there’s no need to hesitate.”

He entered both songs into queue before going to the dressing room to put on Doctor Skull-Cracker’s outfit and some make-up. “They won’t be able to tell that the face under the skin mask is scarier, right?”

Chen Ge packed everything and entered the Third Sick Hall with the faceless nurse’s uniform.

...

The wooden boards closed as if sealing the hope and warmth of the outside world. The youngest, Du Chaojin, shuddered. He had only been in the place for ten seconds, but he had already started to regret. He should not have agreed so easily that day. *I should have followed the examples of Sister Rui and Brother Lin—I’m still too young for this.*

A cold draft of mysterious origin blew past them, causing the empty test papers on the left corridor to flutter. Shadows seemed to move in the classrooms on both sides like something was watching them. The place was dark, and the group stood where they were for a full minute. In the end, it was Gao Miao who stepped forward. “Mr. Han, you’re the most experienced among us, so we’ll be relying on you today.”

Han Qiuming pushed on his glasses. He had not stopped observing since entering the Haunted House. Based on atmosphere and recreation of the scene alone, Western Jiujiang’s House of Horrors was already better than most of the Haunted Houses that he had visited. “No wonder he dares call this the scariest Haunted House in Jiujiang, interesting.”

They stood in the corridor and looked down it. At the end of the left corridor were plenty of mannequins. They were either lying on the ground or standing up. Looking at the mannequins, fear gripped the visitors' hearts. It was as if the mannequins were also looking at them.

"Boss, didn't that mannequin's head move?" Song An grabbed Gou Miao's arm.

"It didn't." Gou Miao's face was quite pale as well. "But I have a feeling that female student in the middle just smiled at me."

"I saw that, too. Wait, did she just move? Why is she suddenly closer to us?"

"Should be some illusion..."

"Are you two done?" Han Qiuming walked ahead. "The scarier the scenario on the left side, the better it is for us. You all should be thanking me."

"Why is that?" Xiao Du hid at the back, considering just calling it quit.

"That Boss Chen was definitely trying to trick us! The scenario on the left side is his Haunted House's main feature, so it must be scariest! Thankfully, I saw through his ploy." Han Qiuming walked down the right corridor. It was the door to a hospital building. His hands gripped the handle. "If not for me, we would be experiencing the left scenario now."

"He has a point," Xiao Du concurred meekly.

Song An also nodded. "The left scenario looks creepy. Thankfully, we selected the right one. Mr. Han, nice job."

All of them moved to the right corridor. Only Gao Miao did not feel so good. "Boss Chen didn't give me the impression that he was a liar."

"We'll know when we see what is behind this door."

The group stood in the middle of the corridor, and Han Qiuming pulled the door to the Third Sick Hall open. The door creaked on its rusted hinges, and the first thing that hit them was the pungent smell of antibiotics. The old walls were left with scratch marks and blood notes. There were barely discernible screams that came from the depths of the hospital.

The most shocking thing was, along this dark corridor, innumerable mannequins wrapped in mattresses were left on the path. It looked like an open grave.

"This..."

Their limbs went numb, and a chill rose from the bottom of their feet to the top of their heads.

Chapter 219: Like the Real Thing

"Teacher Han, are you sure the right scenario is less scary than the left one?" Xiao Du held onto the door handle. He found himself missing Tian Teng Medical School and the steel box that he could hide himself in.

"Why are you acting all panicked like this? The Chen person has said that the Third Sick Hall isn't fully complete yet, so what is so scary about an unfinished scenario?" Han Qiuming was the first to recover from the initial shock. He grabbed Guo Miao's arm. "Ol' Guo, both of us will go first."

"What has it got to do with me?" Guo Miao shook him off. "Didn't you say you're going to go alone?"

"I'm afraid you might run in the middle of the experience." Han Qiuming's face was as dark as the abyss, but due to the lack of light, no one could see it. "Fine, I'll take the front line. The rest of you follow closely, don't get left behind."

Han Qiuming pushed the door completely open, and pieces of rust fell to the ground. The group of them walked into the Third Sick Hall. There was an indescribable stench in the air, and abandoned pills as well as patients' records littered the ground. Han Qiuming walked forward alone, and the sights gradually unraveled his confidence.

Words of madness filled the wall, and combined with words of desperation, it made the skin of those who read them crawl. These were not things that a person with a sane mind could come up with. To make matters worse, as he walked deeper into the hospital, the bloody letters on the walls did not decrease but only became more frequent. They overlapped with each other, and none of them were repeated!

"How did the man come up with these sentences? Is he really a madman?" He squatted down and yanked off a corner of the mattress. It revealed a doll that was made from pillows and bed covers. It was a roughly-made doll, but Han Qiuming found it hard to pull his gaze away.

"You can even use this method to create the props inside the Haunted House? I've indeed learned something new today." Looking at the painted face on the doll, Han Qiuming knew that it was probably scrawled on by Chen Ge, but he was still greatly unsettled by it.

"Look here!" Su Luoluo stood at the door that led into the first sickroom. The group followed the direction of her finger. The doorknob was covered in blood streaks and scratch marks made from fingers.

She compared them to her own fingers. "They look real, unlike those that were gauged from tools."

"You're telling me the designer used his hands to leave those marks on the door?" Han Qiuming closed the mattress to cover the doll. "Be careful not to touch anything in here. You might trigger the trap. Especially these mattresses, I believe the actors are probably hiding in one of them."

He continued to move forward. The rest of them did not follow except the short-haired woman who entered the first sickroom alone. The windows were sealed, and a thick cement wall could be seen through the wooden slits. It created a sense of despair, like they were being trapped inside a prison cell.

Ye Xiaoxin dragged her finger carefully over the bed frame and discovered digging marks on the sides of the frame. "Come help me pull the bed up."

"We only have twenty minutes to clear this scenario, can you guys pick up your speed? Just ignore those insignificant details." Han Qiuming stood outside the room alone. Xiao Du and Song An entered the room to help Ye Xiaoxin. What they saw when they lifted the bed was out of their expectation.

There was a long, dark-red scratch mark down the side of the bed. There were even broken fingernails mixed into the grooves. It went to show the amount of pain the patient was in.

"Fake blood should have a faded red color when it dries up. This kind of dark red stain..." Song An pulled his neck back and whispered to Ye Xiaoxin beside him, "Looks like human blood."

"You sure this is human blood and not fake blood?" Ye Xiaoxin looked at the wooden frame and bent close to sniff at the groove. "There's no smell."

Song An was shocked by the girl's courageous move. He laughed awkwardly. "It could be pig's or cow's blood. To achieve authenticity, sometimes Haunted Houses use animal blood in place of fake blood."

"It's normal for Haunted Houses to have props with blood marks, especially a local Haunted House like Boss Chen's. Most of his props should be directly purchased from abandoned hospitals." Gou Miao had probably done something like that before. "Either way, we shouldn't let our guard down. There is blood on the bed frame, so that means that something very bad happened at this mental hospital before."

Ye Xiaoxin nodded before asking, "How do you explain the bloody scratch marks on the door knob? You're telling me the door knob was also taken from the mental hospital?"

Guo Miao was stumped.

"You also can't answer that, right?" Ye Xiaoxin took out her notebook. "I've visited many Haunted Houses before, and most of them only paid attention to the details around the scare points, but this Haunted House has an authenticity to every single detail. It is as if the boss has some kind of OCD."

"I also discovered something very scary." Su Luoluo turned to look at the ceiling. The sentences written with blood seemed to move before her eyes. "The handwriting for each sentence is completely different. They don't look like they're written by the same person."

"Different handwriting?" Guo Miao looked around closely, and his face turned paler. "You're right. How did Boss Chen manage to do this?"

Han Qiuming had moved forward, but he had turned back when he realized that the rest of his group was not following. He leaned against the door knob and boasted, "Didn't he say his Haunted House has been in operation for several years already? Give me five years, and I'll definitely be able to come up with something better than this."

"Will you spend a whole five years on a single scenario?" Guo Miao felt rather annoyed. He had already arranged everything, but it was ruined by Han Qiuming. "Boss Chen probably wasn't lying. This scenario is the scariest one he has at his Haunted House. We had better locate that tape recorder as soon as possible; I don't think we should stay here any longer."

Ever since entering the Third Sick Hall, he had felt uncomfortable. When he saw the interior decoration, that feeling had only intensified. The red marks on the door knob, the grooves on the side of the bed frame, the bloody sentences on the walls and ceiling—everything unsettled him. The memories buried within him were awakened, and it brought him back to the hospital where Xu Zhenzhen committed suicide.

"Ol' Guo, I didn't know you're such a scaredy cat. Yes, I admit that his Haunted House is amazing with his attention to detail, but this only proves that he is good at mimicking." Han Qiuming's eyes surreptitiously swept Ye Xiaoxin before he pushed on his glasses. "When I visited a large Haunted House overseas, the worker there told me that their props were all taken from an actual prison. Compared to that, this Haunted House is barely passable."

"You'll regret that overconfidence soon enough."

"I'm just telling the truth." Han Qiuming waved at them. "We only have sixteen minutes left, so let's get moving."

The few of them moved down the corridor, and only Xiao Du was left at the entrance to the Third Sick Hall. Looking at the letters on the wall, his heartrate started to rise. As he stared at them, the random letters seemed to move together to form a word.

Death.

"This place is too cursed; I'll just stay by the door."

He walked out of the Third Sick Hall and turned to look down the corridor that led to Mu Yang High School. He realized with a shock that the mannequins that were supposed to be at the end of the corridor had moved to a spot that was very close to them.

"What's going on?"

Xiao Du staggered back. He did not dare stay there alone, so he hurried to catch up to the others.

After he left, a mannequin with a nametag pinned to its lapel silently adjusted its head.

Chapter 220: Shadowing

"Boss! Mr. Han! Look behind us!" Xiao Du ran to the rest of the group. He gasped for air, and his face was white.

"Behind us?" Guo Miao looked behind them, and the long corridor did not have anything weird in it.

"The mannequins! The mannequins are chasing after us!" The scream from Xiao Du caused the group, which had walked several meters into the Third Sick Hall, to stop moving again.

"Are you sure you're not mistaken?" Song An asked Xiao Du softly as his body moved closer to Guo Miao.

"I'm sure! They really did move!" Xiao Du gasped for air. "Come talk a look for yourself. Those mannequins were at the end of the left corridor earlier, right? But now, they've reached the point between the two scenarios!"

"Don't fret," Han Chu said calmly. "I saw something like this in a Japanese Haunted House three years ago. It was a doll-themed Haunted House. The smaller dolls were equipped internally with machines, so they could move and change facial expression. Only four fifths of the larger dolls were props; the rest were played by actual actors."

“So, these mannequins are real people?” Mr. Han’s explanation confused Xiao Du, and he felt even more unsettled.

“I noticed the mannequins when we first came in.” Han Chu crossed his arms before his chest. “The mannequins are life-size, as if they were meant to model actual humans. You have to understand something, even for Tian Teng Medical School, there are natural deficiencies to the mannequins that are used at normal props. This is because manufacturing a custom-made mannequin requires too much money. One of them costs about 30,000 and requires a master dollmaker. This is not something a normal Haunted House can afford.”

“Then, why would this Haunted House invest so much money into making these mannequins?” Ye Xiaoxin kept writing on her notebook, but no one knew what she was writing.

“Very simple. This goes to show that these mannequins are an important scare point for his Haunted House!” Han Qiuming held his chin as his gaze fell on Ye Xiaoxin. “Mixing real actors among mannequins could have startling effects—just look at what happen to Xiao Du. It looked like the mannequins had moved on their own, but it was actually the live actors who moved. If we hide in the dark to observe, perhaps we might even see them in motion.”

Song An nodded. “Mr. Han has a point. We’ve used similar tactic in Tian Teng Medical School last year, but the mannequins were too fake. The visitors identified the real actors immediately.”

“That has to be it.” Color returned to Xiao Du’s face. “I was really spooked just now. Those mannequins look so real that I though they knew how to move on their own.”

“You know that’s impossible.” Mr. Han said confidently; he had logic on his side. “If not for the time limit, I would hide in this room to record the whole scene of the Haunted House’s actors moving the mannequins for you to see.”

“Alright, let’s move on. We still need to find the tape recorder.” Guo Miao had a feeling that things were not as simple as that, but he had no basis to counter Mr. Han.

“Ol’ Guo, we have to pay attention to two things with regard to that tape recorder.” Mr. Han might have said that he was not afraid, but it was clear that he was extremely cautious. “That Chen fella told us that our tape recorder is hidden inside this place, so he must have put down some traps around the tape recorder.”

“I know that.” Guo Miao moved forward. The mattresses made a mess of the place. Stepping on them had a curious feeling like he was stepping on bundled up hair.

“That is only the first point. I have to tell you another thing. Don’t you think that the game rules that he laid down are also very weird?”

“How so?”

“Finding the tape recorder won’t clear the scenario. We have to bring it out of the Third Sick Hall to end the game.”

“But that recorder belongs to us. Isn’t it normal for us to take it out with us?” Xiao Du chimed in.

"You have underestimated this boss' cunning." Han Qiuming took out a cloth to wipe his glasses. The glasses were very thick. "The recorder itself is probably tied to some mechanism inside this place. In other words, when we find the recorder, the scary stuff will start to appear inside this scenario. Until then, we should be safe."

"That sounds logical, but no one can guarantee that." Song An was the largest of them all, but he was quite a coward.

"In any case, I personally don't think we have any reason to be scared. Familiarizing ourselves with the environment and memorizing the route should be the most important. After all, this scenario is open-ended. The environment will be complicated. Only by retracing our steps will we be able to leave as quickly as possible when the recorder is found and the actors start to move in earnest." Han Qiuming finished his analysis. It was unclear whether the others bought his words or not, but he believed himself.

"You have a point. Haunted Houses still need to rely on actual actors to scare us. As long as we're collected and don't scare ourselves, we should be fine." Ye Xiaoxin shoved the notebook into her pocket.

Han Qiuming was validated after getting the approval from Ye Xiaoxin. The fear in his heart slowly dissipated. He was about to increase his pace to walk beside Ye Xiaoxin when someone pulled on his shirt. He turned to look, and this moment-wrecker was none other than the witless and youngest Du Chaojin.

"Mr. Han, look." They turned to look outside the Third Sick Hall. In the middle of the entrance that led to the Third Sick Hall stood a female mannequin in a school uniform. Her head was lowered, and her limbs were slightly twisted.

While they were busy with their analysis, the mannequins had moved closer to them.

"This is nothing out of the ordinary, the most basic of psychological tricks. The Chen fella is probably hiding inside the control room to give the actors their commands. He wanted to use this group of advancing mannequins to pressure us, to make us lose our footing."

Han Qiuming tried to rationalize everything. "At the end of the day, this is all fake. A few years ago, I used something similar. Don't worry, these mannequins won't dare to come to within five meters of us. Five meters is a safe distance. Once the mannequins got too close, the actors will have a hard time controlling them. I can use my decade of experience to promise you that."

Then he ignored Xiao Du and ran to walk beside Ye Xiaoxin. He started to judge the various decorations inside the Haunted House.

"This guy." Guo Miao sighed. He told his group, "All of you stick close to me. Don't touch anything in the corridor, and don't enter a sickroom alone."

"Okay." Xiao Du walked at the back of the group, but he did not realize that when he moved, the mannequins outside the door also started to move.