

Horrors 281

Chapter 281: Spider Sister

Chen Ge rushed forward when the investigator leaned back. The distance of three meters was like a gap that could not be crossed.

He did not make it.

The night breeze rushed through his ears, tearing his eardrums. The investigator's face twisted as his body fell through the air. Those were his last three seconds in this world. The distance between them increased. The investigator seemed to say something, but due to the distance and the howling wind, Chen Ge could not hear anything. Through the shape of the man's lips, Chen Ge roughly made out two words—Men Nan.

Chen Ge could not understand why the investigator would bring up Men Nan at the last moment of his life. Perhaps he was trying to confuse him, or he wanted to leave him a message.

"Yao Qinyi!" Lee Zheng's deep roars came from the safety door. A few officers rushed to the edge.

The body landed with a thud. This was the first time Chen Ge had heard a life being lost.

Yao Qinyi landed on his head. Before he died, he kept his face looking at the roof. His eyes were smiling, and a wicked grin hung on his lips.

Half of Chen Ge's body was hanging off the building, and his arms grasped at nothing but air.

"Ghost stories society..." The society made up from mental patients and killers had revealed its true face before Chen Ge. They had never been concerned about human lives.

"Chen Ge, what's going on!" Lee Zheng demanded with red-rimmed eyes.

Chen Ge slowly retracted his arms and asked with a suppressed voice, "Who called you here?"

"It was the nurse who made the call. A patient saw Ol' Yao escape from his room in the middle of the night. It looked like he was sleep-walking. Considering Xiao Jia's condition, we were afraid some accident might happen to Ol' Yao, so we rushed over from Fang Hwa Apartments immediately."

"It was the nurse who called the police?" Chen Ge gripped the railing with both of his hands. He looked down at Yao Qinyi, at the smile on his face.

What he said before he died, was that the truth or a lie? Who is the real person behind these scapegoats? Wu Fei? Chairperson? No. 10?

There were three members left in the society, but if he did not remove the chairperson, the society would add more members soon. Tragedy and despair happened daily.

When pain pooled in one's heart and was slowly allowed to influence the soul, the flyer from the ghost stories society would arrive.

I'll need to destroy the ghost stories society before next Wednesday. Zhang Ya had gone into her slumber, so dealing with three members alone would be difficult. I need a new Red Specter!

The police cars had surrounded the People's Hospital. Since Lee Zheng and many other officers were there when Yao Qinyi jumped off the building, they did not make things difficult for Chen Ge. He was sent back to New Century Park at around 4 am.

Chen Ge locked himself up inside the staff breakroom and placed the black phone on the table. He still needed to work tomorrow morning, but he did not feel tired. He sat on the chair to go through the mission message on the phone.

Daily Missions can get me rewards, but only the Nightmare Mission will improve my ability. Ever since the rules of triggering Nightmare Mission have been changed, I've never stumbled across another Nightmare Mission. Normal Missions are to focus on improving the Haunted House. I can do those when I'm free.

There are two Trial Missions inside the black phone. The Hearse, a two-star scenario, and School of the Afterlife, a four-star scenario. Unlocking new scenarios and completing their hidden mission will give me rewards that might include new ghost employees. Trial Mission will improve the power of the Haunted House, but a low-star Trial Mission won't have much influence on me, and a high-star Trial Mission will be too dangerous.

Chen Ge was conflicted. After Zhang Ya went into slumber, he suddenly realized that he could be fearless before this only because of this Red Specter who seemed particularly interested in him.

The visitor's screams from the past two days of work should be enough to exchange for two spins at the wheel. The Wheel of Misfortune is a method to increase my power, but there is too much uncertainty.

Chen Ge thought back to his previous lucky draws, and he shook his head. He decided to delay the activity to tomorrow afternoon when the sun was shining.

The situation is urgent. If the ghost from the wheel isn't compliant, I'll have to feed them to Xu Yin.

Xu Yin had the ability to become a Red Specter, and only a Red Specter would be a threat for the ghost stories society.

The society has owned their door for many years already, so they must have more than two Red Specters. The only reason they haven't made a move is probably because they don't know my bottom line. If they knew Zhang Ya is currently asleep and cannot wake up to help me, they would make use of this chance to deal with me.

He turned to look at his shadow. The long-hair woman's shadow was still a shock to him then!

Zhang Ya has probably considered that already. Chen Ge took out the wooden box from his chest. He toyed with the doll and examined it closely. *Why would Zhang Ya give this to me? Can this thing save me when the situation is dangerous?*

Taking a doll made from a man's soul everywhere was not a good experience.

Keeping it inside the wooden box was awkward to carry to places, so Chen Ge found a black plastic bag and tossed the doll inside.

He turned off the phone, lay on the bed, and slowly drifted off to sleep.

...

Chen Ge was woken up by his alarm at 8:30 am. He only had caught three or four hours of sleep for the past few days, but he did not feel tired. The only difference he could tell was that his body temperature seemed to drop lower than normal, but it did not seem to affect him.

The park opened to welcome a new day at 8:55 am.

Xiao Gu was still at the hospital, but Captain Yan said that he was mostly fine and had survived the fatal period. He would probably be released from the hospital in a few days.

Ol' Wong though had the shorter end of the stick. Due to his old age and the great trauma, he fell ill, and the high fever would not recede. During his period of consciousness, he told the police that he planned to quit his security job. The police did ask him about what happened that night, but Ol' Wong could not remember anything.

The visitors rushed into the park, and the number was greater than yesterday.

Xiao Gu's absence meant that Chen Ge had to take turns dealing with two scenarios. He only got to rest during lunch.

The Haunted House's reputation grew bigger. Even though Chen Ge's workload had increased, he felt satisfied. At 12:30 pm, Chen Ge sat on the steps leading to the Haunted House to count his morning income. He was only halfway through when his phone rang.

He glanced at it and realized it was an unregistered number. He wanted to ignore the call as he was too busy to deal with it, but in the end, he still picked it up.

A woman's voice came through. "I'm sorry, are you Chen Ge?"

"Yes, I am."

"Good afternoon, I'm calling from Jiujiang's Children Home. In the space for Fan Yu's guardian, your name has been listed. Now that his aunt is currently in jail, we need you to come over to the Children Home to deal with some things."

"Is it related to Fan Yu?" The boy who drew about ghosts had left a deep impression on Chen Ge.

"Yes, he has found an older sister for himself at our Children Home."

"That's a good thing; the boy doesn't like to communicate with people. I'm glad that there have been positive changes..."

"But what if that sister is not a human but a spider?"

"A spider?"

Chapter 282: Jiujiang's Children's Home

“Yes, Fan Yu adopted a spider as his sister. The situation is slightly complicated. If you have time, do you mind coming over to Jiujiang’s Children’s Home?”

“Of course, is it okay if I arrive at 6 or 7 pm?”

“No problem. Thank you for your cooperation.”

After hanging up the phone, Chen Ge thought back to the last sentence the worker said. *“But what if that sister is not a human but a spider?”*

Fan Yu was the Haunted House’s first special visitor and a poor child. He had witnessed how his father killed his mother and how his aunt pushed his father into the well. Then he had lived for several years under the same roof as the killer.

The boy no longer has any family left on this world. No matter what, I should go take a look.

Chen Ge initially wanted to run out to the sun to spin the wheel, but thanks to the call from the Children’s Home, his mood was lost. The lunch break soon ended. Chen Ge busied himself until 5:30 pm, but the number of visitors did not decrease. Chen Ge’s team had to delay the closing time until almost 7 pm.

The sky was darkening. Chen Ge did not even have time to do his accounts. After Xu Wan left work, he rushed toward the Children’s Home. This was the first time Chen Ge had visited Jiujiang’s Children’s Home. It was different from the dirty, cold, and unfeeling orphanages that he had seen on television. The decor of Jiujiang’s Children’s Home was very friendly, and it had its own courtyard that was filled with various flowers.

“Hey, what are you doing here? We do not allow outsiders!” The gentleman who guarded the door blocked Chen Ge.

“Nice to meet you. I’m Chen Ge, Fan Yu’s family. This afternoon, a member of staff here called me.”

“Fan Yu’s family?” The old gentleman studied Chen Ge, and his attitude changed instantly. “Please wait here for a moment. I’ll go ask. Be back in a minute.”

The gentleman did not use his phone but ran into the courtyard to yell up the stairs. Not long after that, a woman who looked about Chen Ge’s age came out from the building. She was wearing a nurse’s outfit, and she gave off a friendly feeling.

“Mr. Chen, you’re finally here.” The nurse signaled for Chen Ge to follow her. “Let me introduce myself first. I’m Fan Yu’s mother; you can call me Xiao Liu.”

“You’re his mother?”

“Yes, we have adopted many abandoned children and babies here. To make them feel the warmth of home, we normally allow them to call us mother and father. Of course, it’s not forced, but most of the children here like it.” The nurse was a friendly character, but she was shy. She did not even dare look at Chen Ge’s eyes when she was talking to him.

“That’s wonderful. I admire that.”

Jiujiang's Children's Home was like a big family. It was completely different from what Chen Ge thought an orphanage would be like. The nurse flashed a sunny smile. She was about to say something when the window on the other side of the courtyard flew open, and a middle-aged man who held a tray of tea cups in his hands yelled at the nurse, "Xiao Liu, you're running off again? Get back to your post! Keep an eye on Jiang Ling and Fan Yu! They're getting worse!"

The man's voice sounded angry, but Xiao Liu was not afraid. Instead, she was embarrassed. "Yes, I understand."

The nurse led Chen Ge into the building. The wall was pasted with cute decorations, and the corridor was very clean.

"Who was that? The president?" Chen Ge asked.

"That was Doctor Chen. He can be quite grumpy, but he's a good man. He used to work at a large clinic, but after that, he came to serve here."

"Doctor Chen? There's a specialist attached to the children's home?"

"Yes, we have doctors, nurses, nutritionists, and teachers. Each of us is responsible for different jobs, but we're all these children's fathers and mothers." Chen Ge nodded. Compared to the orphanage that Mu Yang High School's headmaster had built privately, this place was much more official. When they walked down a corridor, one of the doors was suddenly pushed open, and two kids ran out holding a toy between them.

"Jiang Jin, Jiang He! Stop making noise in the corridor—it's past 8 pm already. Get back to your room!" the nurse scolded, and the boys went back to their room unwillingly. Before the door closed, Chen Ge glanced into it. There were two bedrooms and one living rooms, and it housed six children.

"You have quite a good place here. The children have new toys and new clothes." Chen Ge looked at the painted cards on the door. They were written with the children's names. "This is weird. Why do the names of all the children here start with Jiang?"

"They're Jiujiang's children, so we used Jiujiang as inspiration for their surname." The nurse explained and smiled with embarrassment. "Of course, some of the children arrive with a name, so we wouldn't force them to change."

The nurse led Chen Ge to the first room on the left on the third floor. She walked in without knocking.

"President, Chen Ge is here."

There was an old man in his sixties watering the plants by the windowsill. He was wearing a pair of spectacles and looked like a retired teacher.

"You're finally here, please take a seat." The man looked at Chen Ge like he was their savior. This confused Chen Ge even more.

"Sir, what is the problem? Did our Fan Yu create some problem at the Children's Home?" Chen Ge felt like he was attending a parent-teacher's conference for Fan Yu. He was asked to stay until the end because the teacher wanted to have a private chat with him about Fan Yu.

“I’ll be frank.” The old president gave the nurse a look. As if afraid that they might be overhead, he had her close the door. “You’re the guardian assigned to Fan Yu, so you should know about his condition better than us. The boy is not a social person... how shall I put this? He has no knowledge of concepts like family, groups, or happiness. We tried our best to help him, but the effect has been lacking.”

Chen Ge knew Fan Yu better than most, so he understood the trouble the Children’s Home was facing. “I’m so sorry for creating all this trouble.”

The president shrugged. “That’s fine. We’ve seen children who were more introverted. The main problem is that, not only are we unable to fix his problem, he has also managed to influence our other children who are facing recovery.”

“What do you mean?” Chen Ge understood why that Doctor Chen was so angry when he saw Xiao Liu.

“It’s a sad truth that many children who have faced trauma or been abandoned by their family will have some psychological problems that need counselling.” The president smiled sadly. “Fan Yu is a good example, but this boy keeps arguing with the doctor. He not only refuses to accept his treatment but keeps saying weird things to the other children. Some of the children’s conditions have worsened after interacting with him. With no other choice, we had to send those children away.”

Chapter 283: Sister Is Behind That Man

“Fan Yu told other children weird things?”

The sensitive Chen Ge realized the source of the problem. Fan Yu had a pair of eyes that could see ghosts. The boy was not bad, and the things that he said might sound weird to adult ears, but they were most likely true.

“Yes, to not interrupt the other children’s treatment, we had to send them to an actual children’s psychiatrist for counselling. You have to understand that we’re a public institution; the budget we receive is limited. Most of the time, our operation depends on kind donations from the public.” The president sighed. “It’s fine if we need to send the children to a psychiatrist once or twice, but we won’t be able to afford it if this continues.”

Then, the president raised his head to look at Chen Ge like he was trying to gauge his attitude. He saw Chen Ge was in deep contemplation. He assumed Chen Ge understood what he was trying to say, so he sighed in relief. He said directly, “Based on Fan Yu’s condition, the chance of him being adopted is low, and since you’re Fan Yu’s only family, I feel like compared to an environment like the Children’s Home, Fan Yu is more suitable staying with his family.”

The room fell into silence.

After two minutes, Chen Ge came to a decision. “Fan Yu did not do anything wrong.”

The president was startled. He thought that he did not explain himself clearly enough. “I know this is not Fan Yu’s fault. We’re merely hoping he can have a healthy growth, so do not misunderstand.”

“What did Fan Yu tell these kids?” Chen Ge looked at the president seriously. “You have to tell me without missing a word; these kids might be in danger.”

“Danger?” The president stared at Chen Ge for a full three seconds. His lips fell open, and the speech that he had prepared was completely useless. They were not on the same wavelength. Looking at Chen Ge, he suddenly felt that Fan Yu’s condition might be hereditary.

“Yes, please tell me what Fan Yu has said and the names and contact information of those children. They might be in serious danger,” Chen Ge repeated seriously; it did not sound like he was kidding.

The president forced a smile. “Mr. Chen, I’ll be direct. Fan Yu doesn’t feel any sense of belonging to our Children’s Home; he probably wishes to stay with his family. He’s a very clever child, but he has some internal issues. If you have the financial power, we hope that you can bring him away with you and send him to an official and professional psychiatrist for treatment.”

“Temporarily, that is not possible. My place is not safe.” Chen Ge was telling the truth. At least until the ghost stories society had been taken care off, he could not take Fan Yu back to his Haunted House.

The president had heard many excuses when people refused adoption, but a lack of security was a first. “Okay, but you have to come see him often to communicate with him. We will try to do our best.”

“Thank you.”

The nurse led Chen Ge out of the president’s room. The nurse felt embarrassed, and she said, “It’s not our intention to chase Fan Yu away. The boy is obedient and clever; he just tends to do weird things.”

Chen Ge smiled but did not argue. “I know what you’re trying to express, but have you considered that what he says is the truth?”

The nurse slowed down. She glanced at Chen Ge. For some reason, she felt like this man was rather convincing. “We’re here.”

The nurse stopped at the door next to the room when they ran into the two boys earlier. Both rooms’ doors were open. “Jiang He and Jiang Jin are on the run again.”

She entered one of the rooms in a hurry. Then there came the sound of glass shattering from the bedroom. A girl started to cry, wailing the words, “Big Sister!”

It sounded like her sister was being bullied.

“Jiang Jin, Jiang He! Go and face the wall!” The nurse lectured the two boys while Chen Ge stood at the door. He looked at the painted card, and among all the children with the surname Jiang, Fan Yu’s name stood out.

This boy sure likes to make people worry about him. Chen Ge entered the bedroom and saw Fan Yu, who was seated at the table, drawing with his head lowered. He did not seem to mind the outside world. Beside Fan Yu was a little girl who could not stop crying. She used her small hands to wipe her eyes, but the tears would not stop falling. She kept calling for her sister.

After the nurse dealt with Jiang Jin and Jiang He, she hugged the girl to console her, but the girl only cried even harder. Her watery eyes turned red, and her finger pointed at Jiang He and Jiang Jin. “They killed sister! They killed my big sister!”

The girl was cute, and the clothes she was wearing was rather thick. Carried in the nurse's embrace, she looked like a ball of cotton. But from the lips of the cute girl, cruel terms like killed and murder kept coming out.

"Jiang Jin, Jiang He! What have you two done?" The nurse was angry, feeling pity for the little girl.

"We just wanted to take a look at her glass cup, but she refused to give it up. It accidentally broke, and someone accidentally stepped on the spider inside the cup," the two boys grumbled with dissatisfaction.

"Spider? Big sister?" Chen Ge turned to look at the center of the bedroom. The glass cup was shattered, and amid the broken pieces, there was a flattened spider.

After the situation had been cleared up, the nurse had the two boys leave the room first, and she focused on consoling the girl. However, the girl refused to listen, and she cried even harder. She struggled from the nurse's embrace and picked up the flattened spider from the ground. Without any disgust, she held the spider in her palms and ran to Fan Yu. With a despairing voice, she wailed, "They killed sister! Big sister is dead!"

The little girl looked like she was only four or five. Even when she stood on her tiptoes, she was just slightly taller than the table. Fan Yu, who was focused on his drawing, ignored the girl.

In the end, however, his patience was worn thin by the girl. He put down the pen and placed his hand on the girl's head. "Sister is not dead—she just left temporarily."

Fan Yu used his other hand to pick up the picture and showed it to the girl. "Your sister was just behind you."

On the normal paper, a black coloring pencil drew out a little girl that was closely bound, and behind the girl was a large humanoid monster that was sketched out using a red pencil!

It was lying behind the girl, and its head was stretched to rest on the girl's head. Its limbs were arched on the ground just like a spider. Looking at Fan Yu's drawing, the little girl finally stopped crying.

He tussled the girl's hair, and Fan Yu turned to look at Chen Ge at the door. "Look, Sister is now standing behind that man."

Chapter 284: Jiang Ling

The little girl stopped crying and turned around to look at Chen Ge with a blank expression. Her palm-size face was covered with tears, and her eyes were red with a layer of mist. The girl's pitiable eyes could melt anything. Even the cruelest person would let their guard down in her vicinity. The nurse could not help herself anymore. She picked up the little girl and pressed her face to the girl's head, patting her lightly on her back.

If the picture was just of the nurse and the two children, it would have been nice. It was like an older sister looking after two younger siblings with all her might. Even though things were tough and difficult, life was blissful with family around. However, the image turned curious after adding Chen Ge into the picture.

Chen Ge stood at the door with his muscle all tensed. It was like he was stranded alone in the jungle, and a monster was eyeing him from the dark. *According to the ratio on Fan Yu's picture, the monster is about three times the size of a normal man.*

Knowing Fan Yu, Chen Ge had long realized that the boy's eyes could see ghosts. In other words, this meant that the spider in Fan Yu's picture was really standing behind him!

His finger hung over the recorder, and veins popped on his arm. Before he arrived, Chen Ge did not expect that he would run into a monster at this heart-warming children's home.

"Fan Yu looks like he has a good relationship with the girl, and Fan Yu knows me. Does this mean that I'm also a friend of the girl?" Chen Ge grumbled to himself at the door. He kept his voice low, just enough to be heard if there was someone behind him.

"Stop crying, big sister left already. We'll go find her tomorrow." Fan Yu tussled the girl's hair. He was especially kind to her.

"Okay." The girl rubbed her reddened eyes and struggled loose from the nurse. She sat on the little chair in the bedroom unwillingly and still held the spider's body in her hands; she refused to throw it away.

When Fan Yu said that the girl's sister had left, Chen Ge sighed in relief. He walked into the room and picked up the broom to sweep the glass to the corner.

Standing in the middle, the nurse felt awkward, like she had been ignored.

"Mr. Chen, let me." The nurse swept the glass pieces into a dustpan and very naturally pulled Chen Ge out of the room.

"You've seen the situation for yourself." The nurse's voice was filled with helplessness. "I was the one who took care of Jiang Ling after she was sent here. It has been almost six months already. She used to call me mother and wouldn't leave my side. She was just like a little angel, but ever since Fan Yu arrived, everything changed. She follows behind him every day and only listens to him—no one else."

"Why do I hear envy in your complaint?" Chen Ge leaned against the wall. He had a good impression of this Children's Home; they were doing good work.

"I'm not!" The nurse glared at Chen Ge. "If Jiang Ling was playing with other kids, of course, I wouldn't stop her, but Fan Yu is the only exception. You've seen those things that he draws. Do you think it's appropriate a six-year-old girl to see those drawings every day?"

"That is indeed not so appropriate." Chen Ge did not know how to explain it to the nurse.

"It is more than inappropriate!" The nurse closed the door and dragged Chen Ge to the corner of the living room. "Jiang Ling was found at a crime scene. You do not understand what she has been through. When she arrived at the Children's Home half a year ago, she wouldn't even speak and had a fear of everyone. Doctor Chen spent half a year conducting counselling, and her condition was finally improving."

Chen Ge's expression turned serious. "Do you mind telling me about Jiang Ling's past?"

The nurse lowered her voice. "I also heard this from the police. Jiang Ling came from a happy family, and the family of four lived outside the city. Even though they weren't rich by any means, they were happy. Her father was an honest farmer, but her mother didn't look like a local. She was fair and beautiful. Jiang Ling also had a big sister who inherited her mother's genes; she looked very pretty.

"Around one year ago, her father made a loan to buy a plot of land to raise peach trees. They lived far from the already isolated village and thus separated themselves from human contact. Just as the peaches were getting ripe and things were going to become better for their family, disaster struck."

After a sigh, the nurse continued with anger and pity. "First it was Jiang Ling's sister who disappeared, and not long after that, Jiang Ling's parents passed away. Their food was mixed with a lot of rat poison; the killer wanted them dead."

"Has the killer been caught?"

"No." The nurse shook her head. "The police didn't reveal too much information. The only thing I know is that the killer didn't steal any of the money, and it wasn't a crime of passion. I suspect the killers are the villagers who were envious of the family's happiness! The place was isolated, and other than the villagers, nobody would have gone there. Also, a few days before the poisoning, one of the villagers was caught trying to steal the ripening peaches. He was caught by Jiang Ling's father, and they had a scuffle inside the peach plantation."

After listening to the nurse, Chen Ge also felt like the villagers might be the killers. Murder usually had a motive, and revenge was a very good one.

"After the investigation, the police couldn't find any suspect in the village. The only survivor was Jiang Ling, who didn't drink the soup. Perhaps she was stunned after watching her parents collapse. The police suspected that Jiang Ling had seen the murderer, but since they couldn't communicate with Jiang Ling, they couldn't do anything. After that incident, something was wrong with the girl's mental state.

"As you can see for yourself, she calls every spider her big sister. People usually run from these creepy crawlies, but she feels close to them. Can you imagine the girl leaning close to spider webs, talking sweetly to spiders?"

"After some interaction, I noticed other problems with her. There is something wrong with the girl's conception. She calls the quilt on the bed mother and the rope hanging from the ceiling her father. Others did ask her about it, but she couldn't explain herself."

The nurse was sad. It seemed she really did care for the girl. "Our Children's Home has been trying to correct her mindset, and she has now stopped calling rope and quilt her parents. After she stops referring to spiders as her sister, she will be able to live life like normal. However, with Fan Yu's arrival, he only took few days to ruin all our effort."

"Let's not talk about Fan Yu for now." Chen Ge needed ghosts to deal with the ghost stories society, so he was more interested in them. "Have the police investigated Jiang Ling's sister? Why did she disappear? Could she be the killer?"

"The police did suspect that the killer could be Jiang Ling's sister, but even now, they have not found Jiang Ling's sister."

Chapter 285: What Happens to You After You Die?

“Now is not the time to speculate who the killer is. That is the police’s job.” The nurse sighed. “I’m more worried about Jiang Ling’s therapy.”

“I’ll handle that, but you have to give me some time.” Chen Ge had a brief understanding of the story. The case described by the nurse had many inconsistencies, and they demanded a closer look.

“You’ll handle it? You’ll bring Fan Yu away with you?”

“I mean, I’ll cure Jiang Ling’s sickness.” Chen Ge was the one who was most familiar with Fan Yu. He knew that the boy had not lied.

The nurse was baffled. “How are you going to cure her? You’re not a doctor.”

“Letting me try is no skin off your back anyway.” Chen Ge ignored the nurse and walked back into the bedroom. He had a wealth of experience dealing with baleful specters and knew how to gain their goodwill.

The death of their parents should be the source of the problem within Jiang Ling and her sister. Finding the murderer and bringing them to justice should gain me the affection of the sisters.

From Fan Yu’s painting, Jiang Ling’s sister did not seem to be that weak, she might even be a Red Specter. If he could build a good relationship with her or even invite her to join the Haunted House, Chen Ge would not be so worried during this period when Zhang Ya was in her slumber.

Chen Ge tried to communicate with Jiang Ling, but the little girl ignored him other than occasionally using a fearful gaze to look at him.

“What do you want to know? I’ll ask.” Fan Yu walked to the girl and pointed at Chen Ge. “He’s a good guy; he can also see your big sister.”

“Really?” The little girl turned to Chen Ge with innocence, and Chen Ge nodded quickly. Using this chance, Chen Ge asked the girl several questions and promised that he would help her find her sister. Jiang Ling was very happy when she heard Chen Ge say that. She even gifted the flattened spider to Chen Ge, saying that was what her sister looked like.

Chen Ge did not reject the child’s kindness. Carefully, he slid the spider’s body into a plastic bottle and kept it on him. After their relationship got close, Chen Ge tried to get more information from the girl.

However, the more he asked, the more confused he became. Perhaps due to her young age, she could not remember much, and most of the things that she said did not make sense. In the end, Chen Ge only managed to get the girl’s former address and her sister’s name—Zhu Xingrou.

Chen Ge left the Children’s Home with the accompaniment of the nurse at 9 pm. After retuning to New Century Park, Chen Ge packed his backpack with the hammer and Xiao Xiao. He planned to visit the address that Jiang Ling had given him that night.

I should bring this with me—perhaps it might be useful. Chen Ge shoved the plastic bottle with the spider into the backpack as well. Then he called a taxi to head for Lin Guan Village, which sat at the edge of Western Jiujiang's district limit.

While he was inside the taxi, Chen Ge tried to give Inspector Lee a call to see whether he could get some information on the case, but to his surprise, his phone was not on.

Is he on a mission? Chen Ge looked at his watch. *Being a cop these days is not easy.*

Chen Ge finally arrived at Lin Guan Village at around 11:30 pm. The place was so isolated. It was carved into the mountains, and the roads leading there had only been repaired a few years ago. The winds in the mountain were cold. There was no light even though it was just 11 pm. The people there either had a habit of sleeping early or the place was completely deserted.

There's not even a streetlight or a convenience store; how am I supposed to ask for directions? The place the girl mentioned should be further inside the mountain, but it will be easy for me to get lost if I wander into the mountain alone. Chen Ge realized how complicated things were when he arrived at the destination. He walked into the village using the recently repaired asphalt road.

He walked for ten meters when the asphalt road turned into a muddy road. The village looked new from the surface, but its interior was old and broken down. Many of the buildings were several decades old already.

Something is not right. Why does this village feel so creepy? Chen Ge stopped moving. He opened the zipper on his backpack to reveal the head of Doctor Skull-cracker's hammer.

Most of the doors are covered with dust. This village should have plenty of empty houses, and the number of villagers still living here should be very small.

He wandered to a random home, and when he got near, he realized the door was locked from the outside. *If someone was in, the lock would definitely be on the inside. What has happened to this village?*

He slowly retreated. When he planned to leave the village, the two phones in his pocket vibrated at the same time.

What's going on? Chen Ge first took out the black phone to glance at it. The message said that the completion rate for Third Sick Hall's Trial Mission had been increased to 87 percent. *Looks like another patient has been captured.*

Chen Ge opened his own phone. It was a call from Inspector Lee. "Uncle San Bao, I thought you'd blocked me. That saddened me."

"There was a mission tonight, and everyone involved had to switch off their phones." Even though Inspector Lee sounded tired, his good mood could be heard through the phone. "Good news, the Third Sick Hall's Patient 8 has been captured."

"Xiong Qing has been captured?"

"You should be glad. The man has been seen patrolling around New Century Park for the past few days; he was probably targeting you."

“Where is he? Can I talk to him?”

“He’s in the ICU. The madman assaulted many officers, and the people from the main station had to shoot him in his legs and shoulders to detain him. He is now unconscious.”

“Inspector Lee, capturing the murderer is a good thing, but you have to be careful. After all, safety first.”

“Stop going in circles with me. What do you want?” Inspector Lee was familiar with Chen Ge. Once Chen Ge tried to care about him, he naturally wanted something in return.

“Then I’ll come right out with it. About six months ago, there was a poisoning case at Western Jiujiang’s Lin Guan Village; do you have any recollection of it?” Chen Ge asked directly.

“I do, but that is not within our jurisdiction.”

“But it within Western Jiujiang!” Chen Ge did not expect that answer.

“Lin Guan Village is counted as part of the mountains.” Inspector Lee sighed. “Listen to me. Don’t go starting some insane investigation. Many weird things have happened in that village before. At the time, the case was quite a big one; it was followed by Captain Yan’s team.”

“What weird things?”

“That will be confidential information.”

“Then can you tell me about the poison case six months ago? Fan Yu is staying at the same Children’s Home with the only survivor, a little girl. I’m doing this to help them.”

“A little girl...” Inspector Lee paused, and his tone suddenly turned serious. “Chen Ge, you’d better keep a safe distance from that girl.”

“I admit she’s a bit weird, but there’s no need to avoid her.”

“According to the investigation, the final suspect and the one who had the power to commit the murders was the little girl.”

After a brief pause, Inspector Lee added, “She once said something very curious.”

Chapter 286: What Is He Digging?

Inspector Lee did not seem like he was willing to talk about it. There were footsteps coming from the other end of the phone. He walked to a more secluded place before explaining, “The child has a twisted misunderstanding about death.”

After meeting Men Nan’s main persona, the weirdest child looked normal in Chen Ge’s eyes. “At the time, a child’s worldview hasn’t been shaped yet. Perhaps death is just a journey to somewhere faraway—that, I can understand.”

“If only that’s all. After the girl was rescued, she didn’t say a word for the next three days. She didn’t make a fuss or even cry. She was so obedient that it was quite creepy.” Inspector Lee thought back to those days. “It was until the fourth day that things changed. A female officer found the girl curled up in

the corner of her bed, spacing out while looking at a spider. She thought the girl was scared solid by the spider, so she reached out to kill it. However, the girl started crying, saying the officer had killed her big sister.

“That was the first time the girl spoke, and it was from then that we realized there was something off about her. A child her age didn’t feel sorry about the passing of her parents but cried like it was the end of the world for a dead spider. What kind of world she was living in?”

“We tried to explain the meaning of death to her, and we realized that, in her heart, death was not the final destination. The girl told us, completely serious, that people would turn into something else after they died. It was not that different from the talk of reincarnation. It was because she was not fearful of death that we kept hearing some cruel words from the girl’s lips.

“A cute girl that looked as innocent as an angel using her childish tone to talk about death. Is she an angel or a demon?”

“After further investigation, we unearthed more details. The first who reported the case was a passing villager. According to the autopsy report, the girl had been living with her dead parents for at least two days before she was rescued.” Inspector Lee lowered his voice. “A child of five was already mature enough to think for herself, but she didn’t call the police for two whole days and didn’t even go searching for help from other adults. Don’t you think that’s weird?”

“Could it be that her parents hadn’t taught her about these things?” Jiang Ling’s pitiable appearance surfaced in Chen Ge’s mind, and he also felt that something was off about this girl.

“There were only the girl and her parents’ fingerprints inside the house. The method of killing was direct, but it was surprisingly successful. There were many other anomalies. In any case, this case is not as simple as you think.”

There was someone who called Inspector Lee’s name. Someone was looking for him, and he answered back. “Chen Ge, I need to leave. I know I wouldn’t be able to stop you, but I still want to remind you. Be careful of that child, and do not go to that village at night.”

“Why not?”

“Look at the map, don’t you think it’s weird that there’s nothing else around the village for several miles? When we interviewed the nearest village—which was basically in another district—for the case, there was an elder there who told us there was an epidemic at Lin Guan Village some time ago, and it killed many people.” Someone was rushing Inspector Lee. After a few more reminders, Inspector Lee ended the call, leaving Chen Ge stranded in the dark, abandoned village.

Chen Ge pocketed his phone. *He said some time ago; how many years ago was that?*

Looking at the rectangular blocky houses in the door, he realized that they looked like coffins. “Lin Guan Village, after separating the Lin ¹, it’ll become Mu Guan Village ² !”

He exited the village and stopped beside the asphalt road. Even in broad daylight, Chen Ge would not have found a taxi, much less at midnight. His way back to the city was gone.

Jiang Ling said that her father's peach plantation is to the western side of the village. I should go take a look.

Chen Ge turned on his flashlight and followed the road to the western side of the village. The road became smaller as he neared his destination. Chen Ge hiked over a small hill, and just as he was about to give up, he suddenly saw a light ahead of him.

Someone's there? The light moved slowly into the mountains; it did not seem to have noticed Chen Ge. Chen Ge nudged the hammer further out of the backpack and placed Xiao Xiao in his chest pocket before moving forward. The mountain roads were rocky, so he did not dare move too fast. After tailing it for ten minutes, the light slowly disappeared.

Wait... Could it be spirit fire?

Left alone in the mountains, he was reminded of the ghost stories that he had been told when he was a babe. They were about how ghosts led innocent people deep into the forest with stray light.

Calm down. Chen Ge patted himself on his face. He pulled the jacket tighter and jogged slowly toward the direction of the light. After turning around hill, the scene before him changed. A peach plantation appeared to have been inserted into the face of the mountain.

Due to the lack of care, the plantation was overgrown with grass, and the peach trees tipped to their sides. From afar, they looked like living humans with abnormal growths. The light reappeared amid the trees.

This should be the peach plantation that belongs to Jiang Ling's father. Chen Ge did not feel happy even though he had found the location. If anything, he was tense due to the appearance of the mysterious light.

Everyone nearby knows about the murder case in this village, so why would someone purposely come here in the middle of the night? Chen Ge moved cautiously. He switched off the flashlight. Thanks to his Yin Yang Vision, Chen Ge could see better than most in the dark.

He slowly moved into the plantation, and then came the sound of shoveling.

What is he doing? Chen Ge was close enough to get a good look. There was a lamp hanging on a peach tree's branch, and underneath it was an old man in his sixties. He was using a hoe to unearth the soil of the plantation like he was looking for something. The old man's behavior was weird. Chen Ge did not announce himself and slowly followed behind the old man to continue his observation.

Even though the man had a halo of white hair, his body was strong. His hands were filled with calluses, a sign of a lifetime of farming. He was wearing a shirt that had almost been washed white, and his face was tense like he did not know how to smile.

Just a normal old man...

No matter how Chen Ge saw it, this was an elderly farmer. However, why would he come to a crime scene to work the plot in the middle of the night?

He was afraid that his sudden appearance might shock the old man, so he purposely returned several meters back and turned on his flashlight before yelling in the peach plantation's direction, "Is someone here? Is there a way to leave this mountain?"

The old man was still frightened by Chen Ge's voice, which seemed to appear out of nowhere. His forehead was covered with cold sweat instantly.

Chapter 287: No Matter What You Hear, Don't Come Out

"Sir, I'm a young man who likes to explore, and I'm an outdoor livestream host." Afraid that the old man might not believe him, Chen Ge told out his phone and showed him the page with his videos. "I'm quite famous online. You can Google me if you want to."

He confused the old man since he kept saying terms that the senior could not understand. "Goggle you? ¹ How would staring at you help?"

The old man tightened his palms around the hoe, and he looked at Chen Ge with alarm.

"To put it simply, I'm a famous outdoor explorer," Chen Ge summarized. He did not care whether the old man understood him or not. He took out a banknote from his pocket. "I'm lost exploring this mountain, and it was lucky for me to run into you. Can you please tell me how to get back to Jiujiang City?"

The old man did not reach for Chen Ge's money. He kept his eyes on Chen Ge. Obviously, he did not trust Chen Ge. The two stood in the plantation. The weather in the mountain was prone to change. There was a chill in the air, and it soon started to rain.

"It's raining?" Chen Ge opened his palm and allowed the rain to fall on it. The moment the rain turned heavier, the environment in the mountain would turn complicated. It would be bad for him.

"I don't know where you're from, but this place is called Lin Guan Village. It is right in the middle of Jiujiang and Lin Jiang. It's far from the city, and there are no cars nearby. It'll be difficult for you to return to Jiujiang." The man leaned on the hoe. His legs were weak from the shock that Chen Ge had given him. Who would have thought that a man would suddenly appear behind him in the middle of the night?

"Then what should I do?" Chen Ge twisted his face like he was really worried.

"I can walk you to the foot of the mountain, but it'll probably take the whole night." The old man sighed. "Right, there's a village at the bottom of the mountain. I can walk you there, but do not go into the village. Head straight for the road."

"Why can't I enter the village? If there are some villagers, I don't mind spending a night there."

"Just listen to me! Why do you have so many questions?" the old man said sternly. This seemed to be especially important.

"But you've said so yourself, there are no cars. Even if I leave the mountain, I won't be able to return to Jiujiang. It looks like it's going to pour soon; I'll need a place to hide from the rain, right?" Chen Ge was

telling the truth, and the old man could not come up with a retort. He glared at Chen Ge, and the silence stretched between them.

The rain picked up, and the old man sighed. "Since it's raining now, it'll be misty in the morning. If you don't mind, you can stay with me for the night."

He removed the lamp from the branch. He dragged the hoe for about three meters before asking Chen Ge, "Are you really an famous explorer?"

"Why would I lie?" Chen Ge did not feel afraid even though the old man could assault him with the hoe. He took out his phone with one hand while his other reached for the hammer inside his backpack. "You can search for me online. Look, this is me."

Chen Ge showed the video of himself inside the Third Sick Hall. It was the most normal video of himself that he could find.

"You've been on television before?"

"I suppose you can say that. I'm considered quite famous in Jiujiang."

Looking at Chen Ge inside the phone and the comments that followed it, the old man nodded. "No wonder. A normal person wouldn't come here so late at night."

After that, he realized that he might have let something slip, so he picked up the hoe and continued on. "Come with me."

Chen Ge and the old man exited the peach plantation, and after a few minutes of walking, they came across four wooden huts.

"You can take the first one. After I turn off the light, stay in your room. No matter what you hear, do not come out." The old man unlocked the first hut, but he did not give Chen Ge the key.

"That sounds scary. Is it because there are wolves here?" Chen Ge came up with a lie. "I hear wolf attacks are common in the mountains..."

"There are no wolves. Just lie down and sleep. Nothing will happen to you if you don't come out." The old man ushered Chen Ge into the hut. When Chen Ge was in the wooden hut, he added, "Remember, don't come out. Don't even push your hand or head out, remember?"

"Don't worry. I'm easily-scared. I will never purposely do things that are dangerous." Chen Ge sat on the bed inside the wooden hut honestly.

"Good. Then rest well. When the morning mist disappears tomorrow morning, I'll lead you out of the mountain." After the old man bade Chen Ge farewell, he entered the second wooden hut.

This place is just weird. Chen Ge looked around the room. There was not much furniture; there was only a wooden bed, and it did not even have a blanket. The first wooden hut had been vacant for a long time already. Dust was everywhere, and the corners of the room were filled with spiders' webs.

How does one live in a place like this? Did the old man purposely give me this hut, or are there problems with the other huts as well? Chen Ge walked to the door to inspect it, and he realized something weird. Normally, the door lock was inside the door, but the lock for this hut was on the outside.

He told me not to leave, but the door can't even be locked from the inside. Chen Ge felt like the old man had to be hiding something from him. He leaned against the door and yelled at the hut opposite, "Sir! I still don't know your name!"

"Can you please keep your voice down? I'm not deaf." The old man's voice was shaking. He seemed to be worried about something. "My surname is Bai. Quickly go to sleep!"

"Okay."

After twenty minutes, Chen Ge yelled at the hut next door again, "Master Bai, are you there?"

"What now?"

"Nothing, I just want to thank you and wish you a healthy life!"

"Go to sleep!"

Chen Ge leaned against the wall, and the expression on his face was serious. He yelled at the hut next door at twenty minutes interval. Normally, if someone was woken up, their voice would be mixed with anger or drowsiness, but Master Bai's replies did not sound like that. None of his replies sounded like he was asleep, and his voice was shaking. This meant that he was not sleeping. If anything, it felt like he was waiting for something to arrive!

Master Bai looks like an honest man, and he even warned me about the village at the bottom of the mountain. He doesn't seem like a bad person, but his curious activities make me worry. Chen Ge silently opened the wooden door a sliver. The rain was pouring, and darkness covered everything.

These four huts should be Jiang Ling's family's old home, but it's unclear which one is the hut where her parents died.

Pressing the play button on the recorder, Chen Ge pulled open his backpack to grab the handle of the hammer. He did not stay in his hut but slowly inched toward the three other huts.

The sound of rain muffled his footsteps. Chen Ge held the hammer and stopped before the old man's hut. He leaned his ear on the door.

Chapter 288: Friends?

The wooden hut was completely silent. Chen Ge stayed at the door for about ten seconds until Xu Yin's suppressed voice came out from the recorder. "So painful..."

The old man probably was still awake because when Xu Yin spoke, there was a commotion inside the hut. The old man heard the noise coming from outside the door, but he did not come out to take a look. Instead, he buried his head deeper under the covers.

He must be very afraid.

The door of the second wooden hut was also locked from the outside. Chen Ge tried to wiggle the lock loose, but the door only moved a centimeter before it got stuck on something. Chen Ge looked through the gap, and the second wooden hut was filled with more furniture than his hut. There was a wooden bed, a wooden table, a chair, and a dresser without the doors. A bunch of clothes that had been washed a few too many times were hanging inside it.

Looks like he has lived here a long time already.

Chen Ge could not understand it. The old man was obviously afraid, so why did he move to live at the crime scene? Even more curiously, why did he go digging at the peach plantation at night? It was not yet time to demand an explanation from the old man. Chen Ge retreated silently and headed for the third wooden hut.

There was no moon or stars, and the rain made the night even darker than usual. Chen Ge did not turn on the flashlight, but his Yin Yang Vision allowed him to see clearly in the dark. He soon arrived at the third wooden hut. The third wooden hut was the largest. There was a rusted lock on the door. Chen Ge pushed on it slightly, and to his surprise, the lock was just for decoration.

The door creaked opened, and this door of the third wooden house was different from others because it could be locked from both inside and outside. Chen Ge felt confused by this anomaly.

For a normal village house, there would be locks on both sides. Even if there was not a lock on the inside, there would be a door bolt so that the person inside could lock the door if they wanted some privacy. However, it was not like that for the first and second wooden huts. The inside of the door was completely blank.

It feels like the first and second wooden huts act as a livestock pen, and the lock is on the outside to prevent the animals locked inside from getting out.

Chen Ge entered the third wooden hut. The hut was separated into two rooms. There was a large wooden bed in the inner room, and the outer room had a wooden table and a simple hearth.

This should be the house where Jiang Ling's parents died.

Chen Ge did not feel uncomfortable—perhaps he had gotten used to it. He ransacked the place and realized that there were many hemp ropes hanging on the walls, and he found a set of carpentry tools under the bed.

The layer of dust is very thick, meaning that the tool box hasn't been touched for a long time already. It probably belonged to the victims. Chen Ge replaced the box and looked at the wooden hut. Jiang Ling's father was probably a carpenter. Did he build these wooden huts himself? So, were the doors of the first two huts designed like that on purpose?

Chen Ge left the third hut and headed for the last one. The hut was situated at the deepest part of the plantation. It seemed isolated from the other three, and it sat at least ten meters away. Chen Ge treaded along the muddy path before he reached the fourth wooden hut. There were two locks on the door, one rusted and the other new.

The new lock should be the old gentleman's doing. What kind of secret is this hut hiding?

Chen Ge walked around the hut, but the house did not even have a window. It was completely sealed. He leaned at the gap of the door and looked into the room. There were plenty of nails in the walls, and several hemp ropes hung from them. The corners were filled with spider webs.

There was something that looked like a medieval torture device in the middle of the room. It was built from several wooden parts, and it could shackle someone in the middle of it, to stop said person from moving.

“So painful...” Xu Yin’s voice came from the recorder. Different from the earlier voice, this time he sounded like he was warning Chen Ge.

This is weird. There’s not even a table or bed in this fourth hut; what is the purpose of this place?

Chen Ge took out his hammer, and after a short hesitation, he convinced himself not to smash the wooden door.

I shouldn’t act too brash; it might leave a bad impression.

The rain continued to pour, and lightning occasionally crossed the sky. Chen Ge did not find anything. He returned to his own room. *There’s nothing here other than the bed. It’s hard to even block the door.*

He was worried that someone might sneak into his room at midnight, so he moved the bed to the door. *Looks like that’s all I can do.*

Chen Ge curled up in bed, holding Xiaoxiao while he kept his eyes on the small window of the hut. The window was about the size of a basketball. Living inside the wooden hut felt like he was trapped inside a prison. *If nothing happens, I’ll go ask the old gentleman for an explanation when the sun rises.*

The rain picked up the pace outside the window. The wind caused the branches to creak, and their shadows looked like small hands reaching for the wooden huts. Chen Ge was looking through his phone at 2 am when he heard the sound of a door opening. It did not sound like it came from the hut next door but the third wooden hut.

The old man didn’t leave his room, and it was someone else who opened the door. Looks like the thing that he is afraid of has finally appeared!

Chen Ge took in a deep breath and grabbed the sheets that were covered with spider webs. Ignoring the dirt, he covered his body with them, only leaving his eyes outside. He kept his eyes on the window.

The rain kept falling, and it sounded like something was moving outside. The footsteps were rushed and irregular like a crowd was bustling to get somewhere. *It’s coming!*

There was scratching on the wooden door next door; it sounded like several hands were scratching the wooden door. It lasted for a whole minute, and Chen Ge suddenly heard a woman’s voice coming from the old man’s hut. “Save me, save me.”

The woman was crying, and from the voice, it sounded like she was young.

This is the thing the old man is afraid of?

Chen Ge's mind turned. The old man seemed to know that the woman would appear, so he pretended to be asleep inside the hut and did not respond in any way. The voice lasted for about ten minutes before it disappeared. The irregular footsteps began again, but this time, they were heading toward Chen Ge's hut.

The scratching sound began outside the door. The other party seemed to realize something because it increased its strength until the wooden door started to swing. Curling inside the covers, Chen Ge was thankful to have moved the bed to block the door.

The wooden door could not be opened, and the monster scratched madly. After several seconds, the woman's crying voice started. "Save me, save me, save me!"

The door continued to swing. Chen Ge reached into his backpack to grab the hammer. He was ready for the confrontation, but the voice only lasted for several seconds before it disappeared alongside the scratching noise.

I don't hear footsteps; she hasn't left yet! Such a cunning creature.

Chen Ge stayed inside the covers. He wanted to poke his head out to look at what was happening, but when his gaze swept across the window, his breath stopped.

A woman's head hung outside the window. Her eyes were completely white, and blood red spider silk dangled from her lips, intertwining with her black hair.

"Save me, save me!"

The woman opened her lips, and the blood red spider web climbed into the hut. Numerous hands gripped the edge of the window.

Chen Ge tossed the backpack aside after grabbing the hammer. He looked at the woman and walked toward her voluntarily!

Chapter 289: Body Inside the Peach Plantation

The temporarily flash of light made the dangling head look even scarier. Several slender hands reached for the window, and the edge was covered with fingers—creepy! At this crucial moment, however, Chen Ge was thinking about something else.

The woman's face is similar to the spider monster drawn by Fan Yu. She doesn't look old; it fits perfectly. She should be Jiang Ling's older sister.

The wooden beam creaked. The hut seemed like it was going to crumble under the pressure and was shaking. The spider web crawled toward Chen Ge, and the woman squeezed her head into the room. "Save me, save me!"

"I did come here to save you!" Chen Ge did not dare wait anymore lest the situation got out of control. This was probably the first time the woman had heard such an answer. She stopped talking but continued to crawl into the room. Blood red web stuck to the wall, and the woman's face twisted with various emotions.

“You’re Jiang Ling’s sister; we’ve met before!” The woman was unfazed like she did not understand what Chen Ge was talking about. “Jiujiang’s Children’s Home! Don’t you remember?”

Chen Ge was ready to call Xu Yin when he suddenly remembered something. He retrieved a plastic bottle from his pocket. “This is what your little sister gave me!”

There was a flattened spider inside the bottle. When he left the Children’s Home, Jiang Ling had given Chen Ge the spider’s body as a present. The hut stopped shaking. The woman’s eyes that were lacking pupils looked at the plastic bottle. She stopped destroying the window. After looking at Chen Ge for a while, she leaned her head toward him.

The woman’s neck was fair and sexy, but the length was double that of a normal human neck. Chen Ge twisted the bottle open and handed it to the woman with one hand. The scary monster finally calmed down. She kept her mouth closed like she was considering some stuff.

“I bear no ill will toward you. I just feel like you and your sister are very sad, so I came to help you.” Chen Ge silently turned off the recorder. “Your sister has told me many things. I can understand your situation and your pain. Technically speaking, we’re about the same; I too have survived some despairing ordeals.”

Chen Ge had told Xu Yin the same thing before. He was not good at social interactions, so the only thing he could do was place himself in other people’s shoes. The ghost and the human looked at each other with a wall between them.

“I’ll help you clear your name, and I’ll take care of your family!

“Why do you think I entered the mountain alone in the middle of the night?

“I just want to help you little sister, who wants to relieve her sister’s pain!”

In the end, even Chen Ge believed in what he was saying. He looked serious and pain could be heard in his voice. The woman pulled back her head. She looked at Chen Ge with her head titled. The expression on her face did not look that angry anymore, and in its place was confusion.

“I can help you put down your resentment and bring you away from this painful place. I can find you a new home to live,” said Chen Ge earnestly.

The woman appeared like she had started to believe Chen Ge. She did not quite understand what Chen Ge was saying, but when he mentioned bringing her away, she shook her head.

“I know you love your sister and want to protect her, but do you know? It is because of your presence that your sister is bullied by other children and is seen as a monster, a patient. She cannot return to a normal life, love normally, and enjoy being loved.

“I can understand you, but others can’t. Believe me, if you continue to shadow her, one day, you’ll become her darkest nightmare!

“Do you want to hear from your own sister’s lips that she hates you?”

The woman felt like things had developed beyond her expectations. Her white eyes turned before she shook her head again.

"I will not force you to make any choice. I'm just telling you the truth. It's for your own good." Chen Ge's voice had a trace of indescribable sadness in it. "The pain that you've suffered and might suffer in the future, I've experienced it before. If you find yourself with no place to go, you can come find me."

Then, he made a brave move. He hid the right hand that was holding the hammer behind him and reached out with his left hand to the woman. "My little brother is your little sister's best friend. If possible, how about we be friends as well?"

He did not purposely lower his voice. When he said so, there was a weird sound coming from next door. It sounded like someone had fallen from the bed. The woman's eyes turned crazily. She leaned back, looking at Chen Ge's extended hand.

"We can be friends." Chen Ge walked forward, and the woman's eyes turned even faster. She opened her lips to shoot a spider web at the door before retreating into the plantation and disappeared.

"Wait!" Chen Ge moved the wooden bed away and rushed out the door, but the woman had already disappeared. *I still haven't given her my address... Never mind, this was a good start. To employ her at the Haunted House, I still need to go through Jiang Ling.*

The door next door flew open, and the old man rushed out, holding both the lamp and the hoe. He stood at the door, shaking. He was truly afraid of Chen Ge. The man did not get scared meeting a ghost but even opened the door to chase after it! What was with that expression of regret on his face?

"Master Bai, you've been eavesdropping, right?"

Rain wet Chen Ge's hair. He turned to look at the old man. Chen Ge's gaze caused the old man to quiver with fear.

What is he going to do? Kill me to silence me? Also, where did he find that hammer that looks like a murder weapon?

"No, I was awoken by the words you said when you were sleeping. I'll be going back to sleep since you're fine." The old man gripped the hoe tightly until the back of his hand was popping with veins. He was so nervous that his lips were quivering.

"You don't need to lie to me anymore. This place is a crime scene. A family of four: the parents were poisoned, the older sister went missing, and I believe that the creature I just saw was that sister."

Chen Ge thought about it before adding, "She disappeared into the peach plantation, and when I first met you, you were digging inside the plantation. If my guess is correct, you should have been searching for her body."

The old man was stunned. After a long time, he said with a voice heavy with guilt and regret, "How did you find out?"

"Not only do I know that you're looking for her body, I also know that her body is hidden under the tallest tree at the plantation." Chen Ge pointed at the blood red spider web on the door. It was the clue left behind by the woman.

Chapter 290: Coffin Village

There was a line of words that was formed by the spiderweb, but weirdly enough, when the old man turned to look, the words dissolved into blood and washed away.

“You’ve been searching for Jiang Ling’s sister’s body; is it because you’ve done some wrong by her?” Chen Ge heard the guilt and self-reprimand in the old man’s words.

“Come in first.” The old man hung the lamp by the door. He was flustered because his secret of many years had been discovered. Chen Ge joined him in the second wooden hut. The old man released a long sigh. “Actually, I know who the killer is that poisoned the couple.”

“You do?” Chen Ge stood at the door holding the hammer; he did not walk in.

“I can make a guess.” The old man peeled back the wooden bed, and there was a coffin hiding under it. It was smaller than a normal coffin, and it was pure black.

“Placing a coffin under the bed?” Chen Ge was confused.

“The coffin was prepared for the Zhu family’s eldest daughter.” The old man pushed the coffin lid open and took out an incomplete plaque. It was carved with the name—Zhu Xinrou.

“Why did you prepare this coffin for her? Are you related to her disappearance?”

“The story starts a long time ago.” The old man looked at the plaque in his hand dumbly. “When I was a child, I heard from the adults that there was a Coffin Village deep in the Jiujiang mountains. The villagers there never interact with outsiders, and the villagers all have weird growths. They observe weird traditions like preparing a living coffin inside every home, but no one knows what they are for.”

Chen Ge could still follow the earlier half of what the old man said. Since the villagers did not mingle with outsiders, this led to consanguineous marriages ¹, and it was common for that to lead to abnormal growths. However, what the old man said next confused Chen Ge.

What is the meaning behind every family owning a living coffin? Placing a coffin inside the house is much too unlucky.

Chen Ge closed the door and softly asked, “Master Bai, is the village still there today?”

“Initially, I thought the village was just a rumor. After all, no one had seen it before, but one day, we were proven wrong.” The old man placed the plaque down and reached into the coffin to look for something. “About a decade ago, there was a tragedy that happened at Coffin Village, and several families managed to escape.

“The families who managed to escape looked just like normal, and they did not follow these weird rumored traditions, so Bai Family Village, which sits at the foot of the mountain, accepted them. However, no one expected that, within that same year, Bai Family Village would be struck with an epidemic as well.” The old man’s voice was steeped in regret. It felt like some of the villagers were against keeping these people, but the majority accepted them.

“The few families brought the epidemic out from inside the mountains?”

“Who can really tell? Those with the power to move migrated long after, and the village was practically deserted. However, the families from Coffin Village stayed and extended their roots there. In fact, later, they even changed the village name, and that is the Lin Guan Village you see today.” Master Bai finally found the thing he was looking for. It was a black outfit.

“This jacket was made for the Zhu family’s eldest daughter. Those who died outside was requested to wear black when they were moved into the coffin—that way, the blood wouldn’t be so obvious.”

There was something curious about the clothes that the old man was holding. The place where the back was located had four sleeves that were about a quarter the length of normal sleeves.

“You too realize how weird this outfit looks, right? But that’s what the Zhu family’s eldest daughter looked like.” The old man’s voice became smaller and smaller. Chen Ge could hear the pain in his voice. “The child’s parents were one of the families who escaped from Coffin Village. Her mother already carried her at the time of their escape, so in other words, the child was Coffin Village’s last ‘seed’.”

“This level of abnormality can no longer be explained by consanguineous marriage; something is very wrong with that Coffin Village!”

Chen Ge did not expect that would be the answer. Looking at the black jacket, Chen Ge could imagine what Zhu Xinrou looked like.

“I don’t know much about the problem Coffin Village was facing; I only know that the child had a harsh life. Her parents were afraid to let other villagers see her, so when she was small, she would be wrapped in many layers even when the weather was scorching hot.

“However, the secret would inevitably be exposed when she got older. Therefore, the parents came up with the idea to lock the child inside their home, to prevent her from leaving.”

The old man folded the outfit and placed it on the coffin lid. It would serve its purpose soon.

“Then, what happened?”

“Eventually, the villagers still found out about the Zhu family’s eldest daughter, and to my surprise, the other families who escaped from Coffin Village did not come out to help the couple but even prepared to kill the poor child.

“They were close to holding a riot. In the end, it was Bai Family Village’s people who stepped out to calm the crowd. They decided to chase the family out of the village. The Zhu family’s father was a coffin maker, so he was good at carpentry. After leaving the village, he moved the family to this peach plantation and lived a fairly isolated life.

“Life went on as usual, and there was a rumor in the village that the family had given birth to a second daughter.

“Just as everyone thought that was the last that we would hear about them, the couple ran back to the village to warn everyone because their eldest daughter had gone missing. Yes, you heard right. They didn’t come to ask for help to search for their daughter but came to warn us to be extra careful.

“A few days later, the eldest daughter was found in the mountain, and her parents dragged her home to be given heavy punishment. They strung her up and beat her.

“Every few months, the eldest daughter would escape, and she would be dragged back every time to be delivered corporal punishment whenever she was found.

“The wooden hut that was built at the deepest part of the plantation was used to lock up the eldest daughter. To punish her, her father even built a special device.

“The eldest daughter was treated as monster by the villagers, and her parents seemed like they wished she hadn’t been born. Only her younger sister was good to her and treated her as family.

“There was an abnormality about the youngest daughter too, but it was not as obvious as her sister, plus she was kind and cute. She was a well-loved child.” The old man sighed. “My land is just adjacent to the peach plantation, so I had many interactions with the little girl. She was never shy around strangers, and we became fast friend.

“One day, while I was working the field, the girl came crying to me, asking me to save her sister. I knew about her family’s condition, so I ignored her...”

At this point, the old man choked on his words like he could not continue anymore. His muddy eyes stared at the black jacket on the coffin, and his hands gripped his knees. “I should have helped her even though she was treated as a monster. The girl left crying. In the end, I couldn’t stop myself from worrying, so I came to the plantation to take a look.

“I saw the eldest daughter inside the fourth hut, and that was the last time I saw her. Her body was shackled to the wooden device, and her several arms were tied by ropes. There were plenty of wounds on her body, and she appeared to be dying.

“I couldn’t imagine what she had been through. She begged for me to save her, but I was too afraid and ran in a hurry.

“Several days later, I finally gathered enough courage to return, but the couple told me that their eldest daughter had escaped again.”