

Horrors 3

Chapter 3: Nightmare Mission

"I know you're still not wholly convinced about the existence of ghost in the world; in that case, how about a little game? The truth will be revealed when you open your eyes."

As mentioned earlier, the description of the Nightmare Mission was incredibly vague; it did, however, give off a creepy vibe.

"Looking at the introduction, it should involve some kind of game, but how can playing a game be a Nightmare Mission?"

To finish the Normal Mission, Chen Ge had worked non-stop for several hours. He had barely managed to finish fixing all the mannequins. As he toyed with the phone, Chen Ge's sense of curiosity was aroused. "Shall I try it out?"

The moment the thought appeared, it grew and expanded like vines invading every corner of his mind.

"Nightmare Missions give the best reward, and since I can't accomplish the Easy and Normal Missions provided today, this is my best bet."

The Haunted House would close if he was unable to survive this off season. Chen Ge knew how precarious his situation was. It was a pure stroke of luck that he had stumbled upon this ray of hope, so of course, he wouldn't let any opportunities pass by easily.

"So be it. After all, eventually, I'll have to apply for a Nightmare Mission, so why not now?" Sitting up in bed, Chen Ge clicked on the last mission.

"Are you sure you wish to accept the Nightmare Mission? After acceptance, unknown circumstances might occur."

"Yes."

The phone flashed, and the real mission details surfaced.

"It requires plenty of courage, incredible luck, and a bit of help to see the hidden world. The game we're playing is called 'Another You in the Mirror'. Enter the bathroom alone at 2:04 am, close the door, and turn off the lights. Face the mirror and light a candle between yourself and it. Then, close your eyes and focus; you can then begin by slowly chanting your name.

"Anything can happen in the dark; perhaps there will be an unfamiliar face that appears in the mirror, or there might be a pair of eyes lurking in the corner watching you, or blood might drip from the ceiling or walls. No matter what happens, all you must do is make sure that you stay silent and stand before the mirror quietly.

"After half an hour, the mission will be auto-completed, provided that you do not open your eyes no matter what happens in that half-hour."

After reading the mission introduction, Chen Ge's heart twinged with fear. "Could there really be a world hidden from normal eyes?"

It was still some time before the allocated 2:04 am. Instead of moving to the bathroom, Chen Ge started doing his research online. Chen Ge did manage to find some extra information on this supposed game, and they were all ghost stories. Some said they were cursed after they played this game, while others mentioned missing friends or family members, convinced that they were pulled into the mirror world.

“Every single one of these sounds so authentic.” The more he read, the more interested Chen Ge became. He was, after all, the operator of a Haunted House; his daily exercise was to come up with new ways to scare people, within a safe environment of course. As he read up on the information to this game, he felt as if a new world was opening before his eyes.

“It’s weirdly exciting to play a scary game in the middle of the night inside a Haunted House!”

He checked the battery level of his phone; he felt like recording this momentous occasion.

“Later, I’ll put the whole thing on recording; if it is as scary as these people say, then perhaps I can add a new scenario to the Haunted House!”

He scoured the room for a candle and lighter. When the clock struck 2am, he carried the prepared objects and moved toward the bathroom on the first floor of the Haunted House.

The reason he carried out this ‘game’ at the first floor’s toilet was also a calculated decision on Chen Ge’s part. If anything dangerous did occur during the process, at least he could jump directly out the window to save himself. The Haunted House was eerily quiet at night. A young man who refused to turn on the lights to save electricity entered the cramped and narrow toilet with a flashlight and candle.

“A dark and claustrophobic environment is the best at evoking the feeling of fear within a person’s heart. The toilet is usually the place that has the most yin energy within the building. Mirrors and cisterns, these items couldn’t have been more mundane, but these everyday items can often be used to increase psychological pressure. The person behind this game is very clever; they know how to make use of the weakness often found within the human heart, and consequently, they are able to create a scary atmosphere with the simplest of objects and conditions.” Chen Ge found this a perfect opportunity to improve his craft.

“Real terror actually doesn’t need expensive set-ups. It only needs to highlight and heighten the sense of anxiety inherent in the human heart.” Chen Ge took a deep breath and put his phone on record. “I don’t know what kind of effect this game will bring, but if anything happens to me, I hope the person who finds this phone will preserve this video because it is a key, a valuable key to unlocking the many layers of deceit.”

Then, Chen Ge placed the phone beside the cistern. He adjusted the angle until the camera could capture his person and the mirror opposite him.

“It’s 2:01 am already, three more minutes.”

The wait for death was scarier than death itself. The silence of the toilet amplified all sorts of noises or echoes in the room. As the seconds ticked by, Chen Ge’s heart started to race.

He looked at the time on the phone. When the minute hand pointed at the four, he switched off the flashlight and lit up the candle. Following the instructions, he placed it between the mirror and himself.

The dancing flame became the only source of light in the dark. It flickered and twirled between the real world and the mirrored world. It acted perhaps like some kind of guidance light, pointing the way for whatever existed in the mirror.

Chen Ge looked at his reflection in the mirror, and he felt strangely weirded out. "Has the game started."

He lowered his head and closed his eyes before starting to mumble his name softly.

"Chen Ge, Chen Ge, Chen Ge..."

Repetition of one's name would put a psychological distance between it and oneself. Eventually, even one's name would sound strange to one's ears. This theory was similar to how after looking at a particular Chinese character repeatedly, one would end up forgetting how to write it when asked.

To prevent that psychological effect from befalling himself, every time Chen Ge chanted his name, he would leave a three seconds space. This way, he was also counting down the time.

After all, the condition for a successful mission was to keep his eyes closed for half an hour no matter the distraction.

Standing in front of a mirror and playing a game that involves only a candle at 2 am inside a Haunted House alone... If I was not doing this myself, even I wouldn't believe someone would willingly do something this dumb. Chen Ge continued to chant his name as the various random thoughts entered his mind.

This game is filled with psychological terror; the most difficult part is not facing those supposed ghosts or legends but stopping your mind from straying and forming scary scenarios to scare yourself. As long as you don't open your eyes, everything should be fine.

However, that was easier said than done, because ten minutes after the game started, something did happen.