

## Horrors 301

### Chapter 301: I'll Take Care of You in the Future

Try as he might, Chen Ge could not get the third drawer to open. He pulled out the top two drawers to try to see the contents of the third drawer from above. However, to his disappointment, there were wooden boards partitioning the different levels, so he could not see anything.

"The room is purposely kept clean, and I do not want to ruin it. If you can hear me, you'd better come out on your own."

This was not the first time that Chen Ge had threatened a ghost, but he had no idea whether it would work or not. He grabbed the edge of the drawer and tried to pull, but the drawer seemed stuck on something.

"Xu Yin!" Chen Ge summoned Xu Yin, and they grabbed the drawer on both sides. As Xu Yin channeled his strength, the wounds on his body opened again. The red blood trailed down his white arms to drop on the edge of the drawer. The drawer that remained unmoved started to loosen.

"Keep going!"

Xu Yin did not hold back. He would do what Chen Ge told him to. The wounds on his body tore open, and blood dyed his shirt. His face was twisted from the exertion, and his hands were covered with his own blood.

"So painful!"

The tightly-closed drawer finally was pulled open the width of one's finger. Xu Yin's power seemed to affect the stuff inside the drawer. The blood continued to flow, and the drawer was slowly pulled open by Xu Yin. When the drawer opened to the size of half a palm, several human hands suddenly reached out from within!

There were male and female hands. They tried to stop Chen Ge and yanked the drawer close. Surprised, Chen Ge and Xu Yin released their grip, and the drawer closed shut with a bang.

"Why do you insist on this struggle?" Chen Ge stopped Xu Yin, who intended to repeat the earlier effort. He picked up the hammer and said, "I'm trying to be nice. After all, we might work again in the future.

"I hope you'll give this serious consideration. I can use brute force to smash the table or use fire to burn everything and look for what I need in the rubble, but I won't. I'm a kind person, and you can ask any of my friends to confirm that."

Chen Ge squatted beside the drawer; he was not afraid of the stuff that might reach out from within the drawer. He gripped the drawer's handle. "This drawer belongs to me, and I'm just taking it back."

He increased his strength and said, "I will forget what happened tonight. Even though all of you have tried to trick me again and again, none of you came for my life. You only wanted to scare me away. I'm telling you not to waste your time. I'm someone who you can reason with. If you have any issues, come out and talk to me."

Then Chen Ge's empty hand picked up the hammer. "Like now, you have no other option. Eventually, you'll need to face me. Why not lower your guard so that we can start this over the right way?"

The drawer slowly vibrated like the spirits inside it were in a disagreement. After ten seconds, the drawer voluntarily bounced out for one centimeter. "Good, I do appreciate cooperative spirits."

Chen Ge took out the third drawer and placed it on the table. It contained several comic books. "These are by the artist's hand?"

The notebook said that none of the publishers wanted to work with the artist, so he probably went the route of self-publication.

"So many ghosts came from these comic books?" Chen Ge thought back to his experience that night, and he understood certain things. He flipped through the comic books that looked to be the artist's work.

The artist had a semi-realistic style, and it was understandable why no publishers wanted to work with him. The characters in his story felt uncannily real. The whole comic was made up by five individual stories. The main character of the first story was a gambler. He was thin and tall; he looked similar to the man Chen Ge had seen earlier. The gambler was born in a single-parent family. He had never seen his father and was raised by his mother. He did not receive any worthwhile education.

If he did not make anything of himself, it would have been fine, but he suffered from the vice of gambling. Even in his thirties, he had no work and relied on his mother. For him, life was meaningless other than being alive.

However, when he was 37, his peaceful life was shattered. The mother who took care of him fell seriously ill, and they quickly burned through his mother's savings. His mother wanted to give up on the treatment, but the gambler did not agree. He sold everything they had but the old house that was under his mother's name.

Even so, the surgery still needed some money, and even if the surgery was successful, she could not do heavy work again. He thought about it and began to borrow money from loan sharks.

The surgery was successful, but the loan had tripled from the interest. The loan sharks forced the gambler to sell his mother's home to settle the debt. The gambler asked them to give him one night to consider.

The second day, the loan sharks returned, and they got a shock of their life when they pushed the door open. There was a basin on the round table, and it was filled with blood. The gambler's left hand was chopped off, and he stood next to the table with the cleaver in his right.

He said that he had not done anything worthwhile for his mother before in his life. Now that his mother could not do heavy work anymore, if he sold the house, she would have nowhere else to go. Therefore, he would never sell the house. If they wanted something as compensation, then he would give them his life.

He was the one who signed the loan papers. He rushed out of the bedroom, slashing the cleaver, so no one dared to stop him. They watched on as the man jumped from the eighth-floor window. The gambler died on the spot, but the arm that he chopped off was still not found.

The main character for the second story was an interning English teacher. The old landlady rented her the living room and the master bedroom while she stayed in the small bedroom. After her son passed away, the old lady became quite confused and absent-minded. The teacher took care of her like she was her real mother. The two got close, and things were moving toward a positive ending.

The English teacher would conduct tuition at night, so she came home late. However, when she returned, the old lady would have dinner prepared for her. She was already old, so she would be asleep when the teacher returned.

Afraid that she might wake the old lady up, she would advise the old lady to close the door when she went to sleep. One day, the teacher came home late again. She did not realize that someone was following her. Once she left the stairwell, someone reached out from behind to clamp his hands over her nose and lips.

She struggled vehemently and tussled with the culprit in the corridor. Surprised by her vehemence, to prevent her from making noises and attract attention, the murderer slit her throat. The body could not be left in the corridor, so he dragged the teacher's body back into the bedroom. He cut her into pieces to hide them inside the many drawers.

It was the old lady who found the teacher inside the drawers the next day.

The killer was caught five days later, but the old lady's condition worsened. With the neighbor's help, she was sent to the hospital.

It was then that the room welcomed its third tenant. It was a real estate agent, and he was the main character of the third story.

### **Chapter 302: I'll Fulfil Your Dream**

Since the old woman was in the hospital for her treatment, she rented the whole room to the agent. The agent, who was around thirty, was not a local, and following the company's requirement, he wore a white formal shirt every day. He was polite and kind.

However, that was hiding a broken man. He was an unlucky man. No matter what he did, he would fail for some reason. Other than that, weird things kept happening to him like having nightmares that his wife had been chopped up and shoved into drawers. It would haunt him for the whole night, and then he woke up in the morning, realizing he did not even have a girlfriend.

When he left home, the sun was shining, but the moment he stepped out, it started to pour. His shirt was soaked, and he decided to stop at the nearby shop to have breakfast. After breakfast, he realized that he had left his wallet at home. This meant that he could not call for a taxi. He walked to the company and was scolded by his boss for being late. He lost the client because he was late to the appointment, and when he returned home, he realized that a burglar had broken into his home.

Such a day of tragedy was an everyday occurrence for the man. However, compared to these things, the real despairing event was the realization that his own house was haunted!

He stayed in the old house alone, and whenever he wanted to relax at night by watching the television, before the punchline, someone would laugh behind him. There were many similar things. In the middle of his shower, someone would pass him the shampoo, and when he was trapped on the toilet without paper, the toilet paper would roll in on its own.

He had once been a firm non-believer, but the many things he had experienced inside the house changed his worldview. To prove that he did not suffer from a mental illness, he bought a camera and started to record his own home. One week later, he realized that there was indeed a ghost inside the home, and it was hiding inside the drawers!

The agent used wooden planks to seal up all the drawers and dressers, and the ghost stopped appearing. However, his bad luck seemed to worsen. About one month later, he was fired from his job, and on his way home, he died in a car accident.

After he died, the agent realized that a malicious ghost had been following him, and it was the spirits inside the home who had been helping him. After he sealed up the drawers and dressers, the malicious ghost had stopped being affected by the spirits, and it eventually took the agent's life.

The main character of the fourth story was the old landlady. The tenants who rented her place had all died from accidents. Her heart was wrought by guilt, thinking this was all her fault. Slowly, the old lady's mind twisted. She had this feeling her own son and the two tenants had not left the room and had stayed to accompany her.

She asked the neighbors, but those who knew about the home's past gave her a wide berth. They thought that she was a tragic woman. Some even moved away like the old lady would curse them. The tenants in the building slowly decreased, and the old lady retreated into herself.

Slowly, there were rumors that the old residential area was haunted, and the old lady was equated to the source of these stories. Everyone stayed away from her, and no one wanted to interact with her.

This went on for a long time until the old lady met a poor artist under the bridge. The man's face was wounded like he had just been in a physical altercation. The old woman pitied him and asked the artist to draw a portrait of her dead son.

Initially, she just wanted to find a reason to give the artist some money so that he could eat, but the finished portrait was not just similar to her son—he managed to capture his presence, aura, and gaze. The old lady treasured the portrait and hung it in her house.

To her surprise, there was someone who came to ask her about the rental the next day, and the newest tenant was the artist. The artist was surprised that the landlord was the old lady. He went through the old residential area and found the cheapest room.

Life was constructed by many coincidences. The artist found his first fan in his life, and the old woman found someone who was not afraid of her and wished to talk to her. The artist became the home's latest tenant. The old lady took the rental from him in a symbolic manner. She treated the artist like her own son, and her favorite thing to do was talk about his dreams and wishes.

One month later, the old lady found something weird about the artist. He would converse with his drawings, and every night at midnight, there would be weird noises coming from his room.

During the third month, the old lady finally followed her curiosity and sneaked into his room when the artist was out. In the end, inside the artist's drawer, she found a homemade comic made from a sketchbook. It had four stories.

The creepy drawing style and scary stories brought the characters to life, and the most surprising detail was that the first three stories matched the old lady's son, the English teacher, and real estate agent perfectly.

The more she read, the more afraid she became. Then she turned to the fourth story. To her surprise, she was the main character of the story, and it was telling the events that happened after she met the artist. The fourth story ended there, and it was the last story.

The fifth story was very short—it felt more like an epilogue. The main character was a comic artist. He did not look extraordinary. He was just like a normal middle-aged man.

The comic introduced his daily life. He woke up at 5:20 am and gave himself a pep-talk in the mirror. Then he started working. He would work until 8:20 am. He arranged his draft and personally went to Jiujiang's local publisher to recommend his story to the editor.

Alas, a month's hard work was denied in less than fifteen minutes. He left the office like a walking dead. He held the draft and sat by the road. He looked at the cars that zoomed past him and only returned home when the sky was dark.

He walked through the busy city and into the darkened staircase. He pushed the door open to Room 304.

The warm light fell on his body. The landlady cooked him dinner and said that she had seen the painting that he drew that morning. She told him it was a masterpiece. The artist could not remember how many times he had been rejected already. He apologized to the old lady and promised he would not pick up the paint brush again.

He hid himself in his room and locked the door. Hugging his knees, he curled up in the corner of the room. He looked at the drawer full of rejection letters and buried his head in his chest.

He had failed once more. He crumbled the rejected script into a ball and tossed it inside the dustbin. He kept complaining, saying that he had no talent, and decided to give up everything. He would jump from the building before he continued drawing. He talked to himself until midnight, and the tired artist fell asleep on the mat.

The lights in the room flickered before going out completely.

The draft in the trashcan floated out on its own, and it flattened itself out. It was placed carefully into the box under the bookshelf, and the table was carefully arranged to a tidy state.

The last panel of the comic was black and white. In the small room, the artist was already asleep, but there were several 'people' floating around him.

The first was a thin man; he used his remaining right hand to cover the artist with a blanket, grumbling how worrisome the man was. Beside him was a woman whose body seemed like it was going to collapse

anytime soon. The woman's beautiful face was locked in a deep frown. She carefully taped the torn drafts together.

On the other side of the table was a man in a black shirt. He was using a pen to correct and edit the comic artist's draft.

The night passed by just like that. At 5:20 am the next morning, the alarm rang punctually, and the comic artist woke up from his dream. He turned off the alarm and looked at himself in the mirror. He smiled and gave him the daily pep talk. "A new day has begun. Give it your best shot! At least you're alive. One day you'll make it!"

### **Chapter 303: Lesser Red Specter**

Chen Ge was absorbed in his reading, but when he flipped to the next page, all he saw was blank. "That's it?"

He looked at the date that was marked by the comic artist and then picked up the notebook that was sitting beside him.

He removed the yellowed newspaper and compared the dates. The day after finishing this panel, the artist died. The newspaper was probably slotted into the notebook by the old landlady or the other tenant. "That was the day his dream died."

Chen Ge sat on the bed with the homemade comic and a new appreciation for the few ghosts he had met that night. The comic told the five stories of the five tenants of Room 304. None of them could be considered bad people.

Chen Ge's initial guess was that the ghost in the comic had affected reality, but after reading the comic artist's own story, he understood the ghosts in reality had entered his comics.

*To get all the spirits to look after him, this uncle is quite amazing.*

Turning to the fifth story, Chen Ge told the despondent middle-aged man, "I understand your dissatisfaction. You wished for your stories to be seen and loved by more people—I can help you do that."

The ears of the uncle who was hiding in the corner while hugging his knees perked up when he heard Chen Ge. It felt like he wanted to turn his head around.

*The comic is indeed interesting. It should be something that spirits can attach themselves to.*

Lingering spirits that were not Red Specter needed to possess a certain item to ensure their longevity. The comic of the artist had over thirty empty pages. If this thing could let other spirits inhabit it, Chen Ge would not need to carry a backpack with him everywhere. In fact, he could bring the twenty-four students from Mu Yang High School to go for a stroll whenever he wanted to.

Thinking about this, Chen Ge was intrigued. "Uncle, neither yourself nor the characters by your hand had your wishes fulfilled. Why don't you tell me what you need? I can help you undo the regrets that you still have in this life."

To increase his persuasion, Chen Ge provided many examples like helping the comic artist publish his work, helping the real estate agent deal with the malicious spirit that gave him bad luck, helping the gambler find his missing left hand, or helping the English teacher meet up with the families she had not seen for many years.

After some time, the middle-aged man in the comic finally turned his face around. He had a typical middle-aged man, and he looked like he had no love for life. He stared at Chen Ge with caution and suspicion.

Several minutes later, the panel underneath him had these few words surfacing on it. "Please take care of us."

At the same time, the black phone vibrated. Chen Ge did not mind the middle-aged man, and he opened the message before him.

"Lucky Specter's Favored! You have just obtained a Lesser Red Specter!

"Yan Danian: A Rare Special-Type Baleful Specter.

"Ability One: Affinity with Baleful Specters (He looks so saddened and devastated that he can easily get the pity from other spirits.)

"Ability Two: Spirit Drawing (After seeing a baleful Specter, there's a chance for drawing it into the comic's sketch book, excluding Red Specters.)

"Ability Three: ?"

Reading the message on the black phone, Chen Ge's eyes almost fell out of their sockets. He could not imagine that the middle-aged man wearing a white shirt, curled up in the corner, with sadness overflowing from his face could be a Lesser Red Specter!

*You really cannot judge a book by its cover!*

This was the first time Chen Ge had met a Specter with three abilities, but the appearance of this Specter shamed all Specters. Even Xiaoxiao tried day by day to pretend to be scary, but this uncle had completely given up. He did not have any pride as a Specter. He did not look scary; he looked sad, tired, despondent, and depressed.

*The third ability has not been unlocked yet; it's probably the reason the uncle is called a Lesser Red Specter. Perhaps it's a power that allows him to control all the ghosts that are not Red Specters.* Chen Ge understood the comic artist's meaning. He had not fully trusted him yet. He needed to wait until he finished the uncle's wish before he could become an official Haunted House employee.

*The uncle is familiar with drawing, and his style is a perfect match for a Haunted House. Other than him, there are other spirits inside his comics. Buy one, get four for free. I can probably ask them to help me maintain the props or clean the house. When the situation calls for it, I'll get them to help around the scenarios. This bunch of actors will be perfect inside a Haunted House.*

A smile formed on Chen Ge's face. He promised sincerely, "Brother, I understand your wish. Don't worry, I'll definitely help you make it a reality!"

Collecting all the drawings, Chen Ge shoved the painting equipment on the table into his backpack before exiting to the narrow corridor. "It's time to say goodbye to the past."

He closed the door to Room 304. When he exited the stairwell, a faded black shadow floated out from behind the nearby bush and entered the comic. It was the escaped landlady.

Chen Ge returned to New Century Park and headed for Mu Yang High School. He explained the situation to all the mannequins, holding the comic, and left without knowing whether his message had been understood or not.

*The Specters inside the comics aren't malicious spirits. They will help me resolve the lack of manpower inside the Haunted House. Yan Dalian himself has three abilities. After completing his wish and unlocking the strongest power, he might give me another surprise.*

Returning to the staff breakroom, Chen Ge logged into his video-sharing app's account. His livestream room was still blocked, but his followers had jumped to 510,000 already. The private messages kept coming.

*Looks like people still care about me.*

The Haunted House's first exposure had been through the app, so Chen Ge did not plan to give up such a wonderful promotional channel. He opened the comic and snapped the panels that looked the weirdest.

"Boss, I'm going to show your work to 500,000 people, and that is first step I'm going to take to help you promote your work.

"Times have changed. A few years ago, you still needed to personally beg the publishers to look at your work, but this time, I'll make them come to you."

Chen Ge did not worry about Yan Dalian's popularity. Only those who had seen his drawing would understand the creepiness that they radiated. It was a style that could not be changed or mimicked. The characters looked like they were captured at the time of their death.

Chen Ge shot a few short videos inside the Haunted House to announce his return and used Yan Dalian's name to start a serial comic called 'Ghost Tenants' on the platform's forum.

Very soon, Chen Ge's comment section exploded. With the combined promotion of online and offline activities, in less than ten minutes, Western Jiujiang's House of Horrors became a hot topic search, and the popularity was still climbing.

### **Chapter 304: Ghost Stories Night**

Qin Guang and Chen Ge's livestreams were blocked at the same time, but Chen Ge had announced his return, whereas Qin Guang was still nowhere to be seen. A bunch of curious viewers swamped Chen Ge's comments; they wanted to know what had really happened that day. Chen Ge did not even tell the police about what really happened inside the Third Sick Hall; naturally, he would not reveal the secrets to the viewers. He gave a few vague replies before going offline. It was then that his phone rang; it was a call from Liu Dao.

Since they were once partners, Chen Ge accepted the call.

“Chen Ge, has the platform approached you to inform when your livestream will be unblocked?”

“Not yet, but I believe it shall be soon. What’s wrong?” Livestreaming was just another promotional method for Chen Ge, he did not worry over the details. As the fame of the Haunted House grew, he had the intention of making the livestream a way of communicating with his fans, like releasing daily progression of the visitors and releasing information about new scenarios.

“It’s like this. Our previous cooperation was really successful, so I want to do something similar, but something easier to control.” Liu Dao had not given up yet. His cooperation with Chen Ge was the first time he had managed to faceslap Qin Guang’s studio ever since their falling out.

“What kind of idea do you have in mind?”

“I will arrange a few of my most popular hosts to enter your Haunted House to do a livestream. What do you think?” Liu Dao anticipated Chen Ge’s answer. Before asking Chen Ge, he had made multiple investigations already.

“It sounds like a great idea, but the timing is not right. You’ll need to wait for a while first.”

“Don’t worry, we’ll definitely give you a number that you’ll be satisfied with. Furthermore, the livestreams will help promote your Haunted House, won’t it?” Liu Dao was an experienced member of the business, so he knew Chen Ge’s concern. “Plus, we will never leak the content of your Haunted House. They’ll use phones to carry out the livestreams, so the quality will not be that clear.”

“I don’t have enough scenarios. I’ll get back to you.” Chen Ge did not want to expose the details of the Haunted House, so he rejected Liu Dao in a roundabout way. Even though there were many detailed guides to Chen Ge’s Haunted House online, reading the guide and experiencing it were two different experiences. One had to experience terror to know how it would grip one’s heart.

After ending the call, before Chen Ge put the phone down, another call came in. He thought it was Liu Dao, so he was surprised when he saw that the call was from Captain Yan.

“He won’t be bringing me good news,” Chen Ge grumbled, having no idea the other person was thinking the same thing.

“Captain Yan? How can I help you?” Chen Ge lay in bed and sighed. He was in a good mood that night.

“I heard from Inspector Lee that you went to Lin Guan Village last night.” Compared to Chen Ge, Captain Yan sounded serious. He used this tone whenever a case was involved.

“Is there a problem with that village?” Chen Ge sat up immediately. He did not think much of Lin Guan Village, which was at the foot of the mountain. After all, the real scary village was Coffin Village inside the mountain.

“Stay away from Lin Guan Village—don’t go there at night.” Captain Yan seemed to have talked to Inspector Lee before making this call and knew something about Chen Ge.

“Captain Yan, you have to be clearer than that, or you’re just going to make me more interested.”

“You should know about the poisoning case at Lin Guan Village, right? The only survivor of the family of four was a little girl.”

“I do. In fact, I just met the girl at the Children’s Home.”

“The girl’s previous caretaker was found dead inside an abandoned old house at Lin Guan Village.” Captain Yan’s voice was chillingly calm, but his suppressed anger could be heard.

“Why would the body be placed in Lin Guan Village?” The first suspect that came to Chen Ge’s mind was Jiang Ling’s sister, but he had interacted with her before. Even though she had a monstrous exterior, internally, she was no different from a normal person.

“That is a question that confuses me as well. At the time, the case came to a standstill because of this as well. We traced back all the victim’s words and actions for the few days prior and found something weird.” Captain Yan sounded like he was hesitating over revealing this sensitive information to Chen Ge. After several seconds, he sighed. “The victim utilized the channel she obtained through her career to purchase blood.”

“Human blood?”

“Yes, that was our only lead.” Captain Yan reminded Chen Ge again. “Do not go to Lin Guan Village alone at night, at least before we have a clearer idea of what’s going on.”

“Then how long shall I wait?” Chen Ge could wait, but the mission on the black phone could not. The three-star scenario, Coffin Village, would disappear in six days. The missions that passed their expiration date would not be unlockable in the future.

“At least until all the mental patients from the Third Sick Hall have been caught.” Speaking of this, Captain Yan felt a headache coming. “Initially, they still acted rather normally, but after that incident at Fang Hwa Apartments, we realized that we’ve greatly underestimated their lethality.”

Chen Ge heard the message that Captain Yan did not say. “Is there another related case?”

“I’m standing at the crime scene, dealing with the mess.”

“Crime scene?” Chen Ge slowed down. “Someone died?”

“Yes, two deaths to be precise, and the crime scenes are weird to say the least.

“The first victim was a burglar. According to the camera, the victim just committed a crime and escaped into the back alley, but he never exited it. A passing drunk called the police. The victim’s eyes had been gouged out, and he died from an unknown cause.

“The second victim was a fugitive hiding in Jiujiang. He was found hanging in his rental room. If not for the gouged eyes, we wouldn’t have tied the two cases together.”

Listening to the description, Chen Ge was confused. “Why would they gouge out the victims’ eyes?”

“We’re dealing with mental patients, so who really knows why? They’re operating on a different worldview.” Captain Yan sighed. “In any case, these kinds of similar cases are due to something in the killer’s history. The gouged eyes could be some sort of ritual, or the killer might have experienced

trauma related to eyes when they were young. Or possibly this is just something to throw our investigation off.”

“The chance of childhood trauma is big. The patients at the Third Sick Hall were all traumatized when they were young.” Chen Ge remembered what Captain Yan said. The killer was most likely the chairperson; he wanted to try his best to understand this sick man.

“Instead of the eyes, I’m more curious about another thing.” There was a drumming on the table from the other side of the phone, Captain Yan’s habit when he was thinking. “Why would they purposely target these sinners? Are they trying to tell us they’re different from normal criminals?”

### **Chapter 305: Linjiang New Schistosomiasis Control Station**

“They are indeed different from normal criminals. They have a purpose, and they’re more insane.” Chen Ge was reminded of a story he had heard while he was at the ghost stories society. “The bunch of crazies once drowned a middle-aged man to help cure one of their partners’ illness.”

“Killing for the purpose of curing an illness?” Captain Yan could not believe it.

“The patient was abused since she was a child; her father forced her head into the water many times. Curses and threats, claiming he was going to drown her. This left a mental scar that couldn’t be forgotten. After she grew up, she had an irrational fear of water. Even when she drank normal water, she felt like it was suffocating her soul. Other patients thus drafted this treatment for her. It was to deal with the source of the fear. From their perspective, she wasn’t afraid of water but her own father.”

This was the story that Chen Ge had overheard when Lychee asked about other members of the society. “The whole group of patients from the Third Sick Hall are insane. They know they are not normal and are sick, but they do not approve of the traditional methods and intend on using their own methods to cure themselves.”

Chen Ge’s words caused Captain Yan to think. “Every citizen’s personal safety is protected by the law; no one has the right to deprive another of their life. No matter their reason, they will never escape the persecution of the law.”

“I’m not giving them a reason; I’m just telling you the truth.” Chen Ge paced in the room. “All the victims this time are sinners, and their eyes were gouged. The similarity is too obvious, so I believe this is another attempt at curing one of their members.”

“What kind of belief will link trauma together with sin and eyes?” Captain Yan thought Chen Ge had a point.

“That, I don’t know, but you have to be fast. You’ve found two victims, but based on my understanding of these people, their favorite number is three.”

“You mean there will be a third victim?”

“No matter what they do, they always aim for three. I don’t understand why.” Chen Ge told the police everything he knew. The society was his enemy, and helping the police was helping himself.

“Okay, we will pay closer attention to this.”

After the call ended, Chen Ge could not sleep. “There are only three members left. Xiong Qing has been captured, so he isn’t one of the members. Plus, with his personality, he would expose me during the Wednesday meeting. From the list of patients that escaped from the Third Sick Hall, only three confirmed living ones remain—Wang Shenglong; Patient 6, Han Bao’er; and Patient 9, Wu Fei.

“Wang Shenglong was at home during the Wednesday meeting, and this was confirmed by the police. He isn’t a society member, and the monster possessing him escaped silently from behind the door. Then this will lead to another problem. Of the three remaining members, only two came from the Third Sick Hall.”

Chen Ge had plenty of information on the ghost stories society. He was familiar with the chairperson’s voice—she was someone he had seen before—and then No. 10 seemed to know him, but his stance was still an unknown.

“When the investigator jumped off the building, his dying words were Men Nan. Could the last unknown member be Men Nan?” Chen Ge then soon vetoed this speculation. He could not trust the enemy’s words fully. At the time, the investigator had been under the control of the society member, so his message could have been to lead him astray.

“Whether the investigator was lying or not, at least I garnered an important piece of information from him. The person controlling him knew about Men Nan, or else he wouldn’t have left Men Nan’s name at that crucial moment.

“Wu Fei is hiding in the shadowy corners of the city while Men Nan is the complete opposite. He’s trying to live a normal life and can be found at any time. Neither of them are my opening.” Chen Ge thought about it and decided to make Han Bao’er his next target. “If I just send all of them into jail, then I won’t need to waste time guessing who the chairperson is.”

Chen Ge cleared his mind and slowly fell asleep.

At 8:30 am, Chen Ge stretched lazily in bed. He went for a shower, and when he past the first floor toilet, his heart almost stopped. There was a very thin crack on the cubicle door. It looked like a narrowed eye looking at the world outside the door with evil intention.

“Something appeared behind the door at midnight last night and left this crack.”

After Chen Ge sealed the cubicle up with wooden boards, it had been relatively peaceful. He had thought that the problem was resolved and tossed it out of his mind.

However, after discovering the crack, the anxiety in his heart returned.

“The crack is very even, and the surface is smooth. This should be a new ghost that I’ve not seen before.”

The world behind the door was still too unknown to Chen Ge, and he did not want to deal with them yet. “The ghost stories society knows how to close the door, and Men Nan’s main persona should know some secrets as well. Now that there’s a change to this door inside my Haunted House, the mission for the Third Sick Hall cannot be delayed anymore.”

Chen Ge had a plan after he exited the toilet. The park opened at 9 am, and the resting tent at the door was filled up within twenty minutes. There were a few familiar faces. They were excited as they talked with their friends, their voices filled with anticipation.

“Every Haunted House boss would love to see something like this. Their work is renowned and can bring in many visitors.” Chen Ge put on Doctor Skull-cracker’s mask. It had not been easy leading the Haunted House to this stage; he could not allow everything to go to ruin due to a door.

“Before the trial mission for Coffin Village disappears, I need to capture all the society members and get the way to close the door out of them.”

Filled with pointed hatred, Boss Chen gave the visitors a few authentic experiences. The screams inside the Haunted House rose like waves and did not stop for the whole day. At 3 pm, Captain Yan called Chen Ge several times. Chen Ge was busy chasing after visitors inside the Haunted House, so he did not notice it.

Chen Ge saw it when the park closed, and he immediately returned Captain Yan’s calls.

“Captain Yan, you’ve caught the killer?” Chen Ge wiped the make-up from his face and gave Xu Wan the permission to leave.

Captain Yan was silent, and after a long time, he said, “We’ve found the third victim; it’s an employee at Linjiang New Schistosomiasis Control Station. We found him in the same state as the other two victims.”

### **Chapter 306: Disappeared**

This was not the first time Chen Ge heard the name Linjiang New Schistosomiasis Control Station, but he had not had the time to go take a look.

“The time of death was last night?” What Chen Ge predicted did happen—the ghost stories society seemed particularly obsessed with the number three.

“The coroner believes the time of death is between 3 am to 4 am yesterday morning. Cause of death is still currently unknown. The victim is a worker, and he left work at 6 pm. However, at 11 pm, he sneaked back to this place. There is no camera inside the building, so no one knows what really happened. We only know that he didn’t leave after he entered.”

“The murders are very symbolic and ritualistic. Since the patients from the Third Sick Hall have selected this worker, he must have done something wrong in the past; we should investigate that.”

“We did, and the man is squeaky clean. He doesn’t have a criminal record, and the other workers said he’s an honest man and doesn’t have any enemies or bad habits.”

Captain Yan’s words confused Chen Ge. In his mind, the ghost stories society was very specific on their rituals, and rarely were they mistaken.

“Could that honesty be just a front? Perhaps he’s a sinner within?”

“Our investigation hasn’t reached that part yet, so temporarily, we cannot make any conclusions. However, one thing’s for certain—this victim is slightly different from the rest. Not only were his eyes gouged out, a painting was carved into his back.”

“Can I take a look at that painting?” Chen Ge’s heart skipped. *The crucial clue should be this painting.*

“I have to follow the rules. Pictures of the crime scene mustn’t be leaked. If you want to see it, then come here.” Captain Yan did not agree to Chen Ge’s demand. He made this call and gave Chen Ge all this information because Chen Ge was the only person who had interacted with the patients from the Third Sick Hall. He was the person who was most familiar with that group of crazies other than the police.

“Okay, I’ll be there in a minute.” After hanging up, Chen Ge took out his phone and sat at the entrance to the Haunted House to think.

*After I completed the Nightmare Mission for the first time, the mirror monster wanted to kill three people, and there was a corresponding number on the mirror that reflected the blood door. Is the ghost stories society related to the door in such a way as well?*

Chen Ge soon reached Linjiang New Schistosomiasis Control Station in a taxi. This was somewhere isolated, and people rarely came here. Chen Ge found the officer on duty and explained his purpose. The officer did not let him into the crime scene but led him to one of the adjacent buildings.

“Captain Yan, Chen Ge is here.” The officer called out Chen Ge’s name directly. He no longer needed an introduction.

“Thank you.” Captain Yan waved for Chen Ge to come closer. He placed the photos on the table. “This is the most I can do for you.”

Chen Ge scanned all the pictures before stopping at a bloody picture of the victim’s back. The victim’s back was torn open, and a half-open door was carved in flesh and blood. Unlike the blood door Chen Ge saw on the society’s flyer, in the middle of this door stood a little girl. She poked half of her face out and had a bright smile on her face.

“Did you discover anything?” Captain Yan agreed to have Chen Ge come over because he believed that he could get some information from him.

“This little girl looks very familiar.” Chen Ge did not sound like he was joking. He focused on that bloody picture.

“The blood hasn’t even been cleaned yet. Can you really tell anything from these rough lines?” Captain Yan had studied every photo on the table for a long time already.

“Yes, very familiar.” Chen Ge picked up the picture and when he leaned in, a sense of familiarity appeared in his mind like he had seen this image before. He tried this several times before it hit him. “Isn’t this Jiang Ling?”

Chen Ge focused on the girl’s face that was exposed outside the blood door. It reminded him of Jiang Ling when she ran over to give him the spider.

“The little girl from Lin Guan Village’s poisoning case?” Captain Yan was part of the investigation team responsible for that case, so he was familiar with the girl’s new name after she moved to Jiujiang’s Children’s Home.

“That’s right.” Chen Ge passed the photo to Captain Yan. “Compare the face shape of the two children. Even though painting isn’t that detailed, the general frame matches perfectly.”

Captain Yan looked at it. Initially, the name Jiang Ling did not even cross his mind, but now that Chen Ge mentioned it, he also felt it could be her.

“We’ve investigated Jiang Ling and her family; they have no connection with the patients from the Third Sick Hall.”

“They’re a bunch of crazies who can do anything. They don’t need reasons or connections.” Chen Ge pulled out his phone to call the nurse. He wanted to make sure of Fan Yu and Jiang Ling’s safety. The painting on the victim’s back was hinting that their target was Jiang Ling. The girl was the only seed remaining from Coffin Village. Perhaps like Men Nan, she had once opened a door!

The phone rang twice before a slightly alert voice said, “Mr. Chen? Why are you calling so late at night?”

“Can you give the phone to Fan Yu? I have something to tell him.”

“They’re in the middle of counselling with Doctor Chen. If this is nothing urgent, can you wait several minutes?”

“As long as they’re safe. Tell Fan Yu to call me back later.” Chen Ge pocketed his phone. He looked at the photos and considered creating an ambush around Jiujiang’s Children’s Home.

“Captain Yan, I have a feeling that the murders are just a prelude. Most of the patients have been detained, and the remaining patients should be prepared something big.”

“Indeed, things might get messy tonight.” Captain Yan tapped his fingers on the table and turned to Chen Ge. “You will stay with us tonight.”

“Me?”

“The real person they want to kill is you.”

Thinking about it, Chen Ge realized that Captain Yan had a point. After all, it was no inconvenience for him; he only swapped a place to sleep. If that could help capture the remaining ghost stories society’s members, it would be a good thing. Captain Yan nodded after he got Chen Ge’s agreement.

They talked for another twenty minutes to discuss the details when Chen Ge’s phone rang. He saw that it was from the nurse, so he picked it up naturally.

“Mr. Chen! Both Fan Yu and Jiang Ling have disappeared! I swear they were still inside the home this afternoon!” The nurse’s urgent voice came through the phone. “I’ve already informed the president. Now everyone is looking for them!”

“Disappeared?” Chen Ge’s eyes turned serious. “Weren’t they with that Doctor Chen? Get him to answer the phone!”

“Doctor Chen has also disappeared. Everything in the room is tidy and untouched, but the person has disappeared!”

“Wait for me, I’ll be there in a minute!”

### **Chapter 307: Going Home**

Chen Ge knew that the ghost stories society was going to make their move, but he did not expect it to be so soon!

“That Doctor Chen is suspicious. I’ve seen that name in the letters written by the Third Sick Hall’s old president, but they were addressed to Linjiang New Schistosomiasis Control Station.” The surname Chen was very common, so when Chen Ge heard about Doctor Chen, he did not think much of it. After all, the letter was addressed to the control station, not Jiujiang’s Children’s Home.

“Jiang Ling has gone missing?” Captain Yan looked at the picture on the table; he was getting more intrigued by Chen Ge. The man not only had very powerful observational skills but also a special instinct and talent, one that Captain Yan felt the man himself did not realize.

“Three people have gone missing. Fan Yu, Jiang Ling, and the doctor, who was supposed to be with them.”

“The doctor is a patient in disguise?” Captain Yan could not believe a patient would turn up as a doctor years later.

“We still cannot confirm that doctor’s identity.” After hanging up, Chen Ge forced himself to calm down. Based on his analysis, of the remaining three society members, two were from the Third Sick Hall, and one of them had met him in real life before. The one who was familiar with him could be the chairperson!

He had met Doctor Chen once when he visited Jiujiang’s Children’s Home, so the chance of him being the chairperson was slim.

“Captain Yan, can you go through all the information on the workers here starting from five years ago; there might be a detail on the killer.” The letter at the Third Sick Hall was addressed to this place, so the old president’s correspondent should have working here back then.”

“Okay. I’ll get Ol’ Wei to follow you to Jiujiang’s Children’s Home. Go take a look around and leave the investigation here to me.” Captain Yan called Ol’ Wei over on the walkie-talkie. It was Ol’ Wei who had driven Chen Ge when they were saving Gu Feiyu. Chen Ge did not reject Captain Yan’s kindness. He might need to travel to many places that night, and being with Ol’ Wei would be more convenient.

“Captain Yan, you’re looking for me?” Ol’ Wei would retire in a few months. Normally, Captain Yan would not send him to the frontlines—he wanted to let the senior officer enjoy a few peaceful months before his retirement.

“You’ll be partnering with Chen Ge tonight, take good care of him.”

“Understood!”

When Captain Yan brought Ol' Wei up to speed, Chen Ge was still trying to understand the connection between Jiang Ling, the ghost stories society, and the New Schistosomiasis Control Station.

Chen Ge leaned against the table. *There has to be a reason the ghost stories society selected their last victim from this place, and several years ago, the old president was also conversing with someone working here. The key question is, what is the connection between the New Schistosomiasis Control Station and the girl from Coffin Village?*

"Chen Ge, don't waste time. Both of you move out immediately." Captain Yan patted Chen Ge's shoulders. He assumed that Chen Ge was worried about Fan Yu and Jiang Lin. "I'm sure the two kids are safe."

"I'm thinking about something else." Chen Ge suddenly turned around to face Captain Yan. "You told me before that Jiang Ling's former caretaker was found inside an old home at Lin Guan Village."

"Yes." Captain Yan did not know where Chen Ge was going with this.

"That person bought blood before she died!" Chen Ge's eyes sparkled. "There has to be a connection between Jiang Ling, this New Schistosomiasis Control Station, and the patients from Third Sick Hall, and I believe that connection is related to blood."

"You misunderstood something; this New Schistosomiasis Control Station doesn't have blood storage." Captain Yan shook his head. "This place mainly deals with prevention of diseases contracted via blood. You can call it a specialist hospital."

"Then could there be another possibility. They're breeding a special kind of parasite that needs human blood to survive? Or it's not a parasite but something else that need human blood to survive. The patients need this, and Jiang Ling has this!"

Chen Ge voiced his opinion, and it confused Captain Yan and Ol' Wei. Chen Ge only explained half of his thought; Jiang Ling was Coffin Village's final seed. Most of villagers from that village were born with abnormalities, and the rate of occurrence was too high to be explained by close marriage. Chen Ge now suspected that the abnormality was caused by this thing.

"Go to the Children's Home first. I'll have someone inspect the station closely. If there's any update, I'll inform you." Captain Yan thought about what Chen Ge said, and he believed it could be a good opening.

"Be careful, it's best if the investigation is done in groups." Chen Ge was worried. The thing the society wanted might not be a physical parasite; it could be a curse or even a rare Specter.

The sky was dark when Ol' Wei drove Chen Ge to the Children's Home in the police car. When they arrived, the old guard and nurse were already waiting for them.

"We cannot find them, and the camera at the front door didn't catch them. They should have slipped out through another channel." The guard was feeling guilty.

"Bring us to the room where Fan Yu and Jiang Ling were last seen." If this was really the society, then it was normal for them to miss the clues.

"Follow me." The nurse led Chen Ge into the counselling room. The room was painted brightly and could make people feel relaxed as they walk in.

“At 4 pm, the two children were still playing in here, but when I came to take a look, they had disappeared,” the nurse explained as she fidgeted all over the place.

“Calm down.” Chen Ge did not touch anything in the room and just looked around. “There’s no sign of struggle, and everything is in its place; the two children probably left voluntarily.”

“Could it be Doctor Chen who brought them away? Impossible! Doctor Chen is a good man. He had saved many children here, giving them the courage to face life again.” The nurse’s voice turned loud; she refused to accept this reality.

“Sometimes a good person and a bad person is just a thought away.” Chen Ge walked to the table where he saw several weird drawings. In the first drawing, two black people were sitting in the middle, and a red person with a long body reached in through the window.

*This should be Fan Yu’s; he’s leaving me clues. Chen Ge picked up the drawing. The black ones are people, and red ones, ghosts. Looks like the society has really targeted Jiang Ling.*

He flipped over to the second picture, and a red woman shaped like a spider tore the ghost that was reaching through the window apart. She seemed to be feasting. *Jiang Ling’s sister saved them. Of course, with Jiang Ling’s sister around, unless the society came with full force, they wouldn’t be able to hurt them.*

Chen Ge turned to the third drawing. Under the protection of the spider lady, the two black people walked into a door, and beside the door was something written in red crayon—Going home.

### **Chapter 308: I Want to Go Take a Look**

“Since he still had time to draw, this means that both of them aren’t injured. They probably left on their own since they sensed danger coming.” Chen Ge had never treated Fan Yu and Jiang Ling as normal children.

“What are you looking at?” Ol’ Wei and the nurse wandered over. They saw the writing on the paper. “Going home? What does it mean?”

“Before they became orphans, they had their own home.” When he saw these words, the first thing that entered Chen Ge’s mind was Lin Guan Village; that was the place Jiang Ling grew up. “Brief the situation here to Captain Yan; tonight, we might be heading to somewhere remote.”

“Okay.”

Chen Ge turned to look at the fourth drawing that was at the very bottom. It was a broken home drawn in black, and something that looked like a coffin was leaning against its left wall. *The third picture is entering the door, and this last picture is a home. Fan Yu is trying to tell me the door’s location?*

He folded the last drawing and pocketed it. Based on his speculation, the ‘door’ that Fan Yu and Jiang Ling entered should be hiding inside this old home with a coffin. *Last time I entered Lin Guan Village, I didn’t see anyone placing coffin outside their door. The home in Fan Yu’s painting should be referring to Coffin Village inside the mountains.*

The people had disappeared, and the only way to clarify this speculation was to go Coffin Village personally. Chen Ge took a deep breath. *I have to find them as soon as possible. After entering the door, it will be difficult for them to leave!*

“Mr. Chen, do you think anything will happen to Jiang Ling and Fan Yu?” the nurse asked with worry. Chen Ge looked at the nurse and placed the drawings down. There was another question that needed answering.

None of Fan Yu’s four drawings featured Doctor Chen!

What kind of role did the doctor play in this disappearance? If Doctor Chen was a member of the ghost stories society, why did the thin monster in Fan Yu’s drawing come from outside the window and not from Doctor Chen’s back?

Based on Chen Ge’s understanding of the ghost stories society, after the ghost possessing someone was torn open, the human would suffer mental pain and faint, but Doctor Chen could not be found at the scene.

*The guy is not simple; I have to be careful.*

After consoling the nurse, Chen Ge and Ol’ Wei left Jiujiang’s Children’s Home. “I’ve already reported what happened here to Captain Yan, where are we going now?”

“Back to New Century Park first, I need to go grab some tools.” The society had lost three quarters of their member in a week; they had been forced to jump the gun, so naturally, Chen Ge would not be careless. Ol’ Wei did not question Chen Ge; the order that he had received from Captain Yan was just to protect Chen Ge.

When they arrived at New Century Park, Chen Ge rushed into the Haunted House to grab the hammer, the recorder, Pen Spirit, and Xiaoxiao. Then he took the comic from Western Jiujiang’s Private Academy and invited the boy with the stench and the hanging student to join him.

*If Zhang Ya was here, then this wouldn’t be so troublesome.*

Chen Ge looked at the bulging backpack and sighed. “I still don’t feel safe!”

He glanced at the white cat that was laying on the table biting its tail. He thought about it and picked up the cat. “There’s a saying in the countryside that ghosts are afraid of cats.”

With the white cat looking at him with confusion, Chen Ge placed it in another bag. “Having fed you for so long, I’ll depend on you tonight.”

Before the cat could react, Chen Ge rushed out of the Haunted House carrying the two large bags.

Inside the car, Chen Ge opened the bag for the cat to breathe. “Ol’ Wei, start the car. Today, we’re going to Lin Guan Village at the edge of the mountain.”

Ol’ Wei’s face turned with curiosity when he saw Chen Ge enter the car with the two large bags. He thought Chen Ge had overreacted. After all, from a normal person’s perspective, between looking for missing children and the group of murderers going around gouging people’s eyes out, the latter obviously was more dangerous.

“What are you carrying? Why do I hear a cat meowing?” Ol’ Wei started the car. He had been on the same team as Captain Yan for the poisoning case, so he knew the village’s location.

“My cat can protect us from curses.”

“Whatever you say.”

...

At 10 pm, they finally arrived at Lin Guan Village. As the car stopped, Chen Ge jumped out of the car and raced into the village with the white cat trailing behind him.

“Wait for me!” Ol’ Wei parked the car, and when he looked out, Chen Ge had already disappeared. Chen Ge took out Fan Yu’s drawing and compared it to the buildings inside the village.

There was a road leading to Lin Guan Village, but it was a halted project. It ended at the entrance to the village. The surrounding buildings were abandoned, and all the houses were locked.

*It’s only just gone ten, but the village is already completely dark.*

Similar to his last visit, Chen Ge could not see another living person inside the village.

“Don’t wander around like this; you’re going to cause unnecessary misunderstanding.” Ol’ Wei finally caught up to Chen Ge and quickly rushed over to drag him out of the village.

“Then what do you suggest we do?”

“How about we find someone to ask?” Ol’ Wei knocked on one of the doors. Initially, the man had a bad attitude, but after Ol’ Wei showed his badge, the villager obediently opened the door and welcomed them in.

“Did you see a middle-aged man around thirty leading two kids into Lin Guan Village today?” Ol’ Wei asked directly.

“A child-kidnapper?” Their host was an honest farmer.

“Just answer the question.”

“No, people rarely come to this place anymore.” When they were talking, Chen Ge looked around the room. There was a small shrine, and on top of it was a black-and-white picture of an old day. Other than that, the place was a normal farmer’s home.

“Look at this drawing, does this village have something similar?” Chen Ge placed Fan Yu’s drawing before the farmer.

He scratched his head. “What is this? Is that a shelf beside the house?”

“That’s a coffin.” Chen Ge said and this caused the other two to go silent.

“Who would leave a coffin by the door. We don’t have that here.” The farmer sneaked a look at Chen Ge. For some reason, he felt afraid of the man.

“I’ll ask you another question, do you know Coffin Village inside the mountain?”

When Chen Ge said Coffin Village, the farmer's eyes twitched, and he grabbed the water to hide his panic. "Why are you asking that? The place was cursed by an epidemic. Those who didn't die escaped. None of the villagers here dare bring up that name lest we too get cursed."

"Looks like you do know about the village. Do you know where it is?" Chen Ge spoke calmly, but his gaze was scary. "I want to go to take a look."

### **Chapter 309: Black and White Photo**

"Now? A-are you kidding?" the farmer stammered.

"Yes, now. My two kids are missing, and they might have wandered into Coffin Village." Chen Ge could not afford to delay this any longer. The mountains were hard to trek through, and the two kids might get into some accident.

"Go ask another family." The water in the host's cup spilled out. He was clearly nervous and afraid. "I've only heard about the stories from the older generation; I don't really know the location."

He noticed Chen Ge's gaze changing, like it was turning colder, so he immediately added, "You can ask the seniors in the village. They must know something. I can bring you to go meet them."

When the farmer said so, Chen Ge nodded. "Please."

"Of course, of course." The farmer wiped the sweat from his brow and went inside the house to look for a flashlight.

"Chen Ge, be careful, don't scare the poor man," Ol' Wei, who stood beside Chen Ge, reminded him. To be honest, he was worried about partnering up with Chen Ge, especially when he thought back to the things that Chen Ge had done.

"I know what I'm doing," Chen Ge said softly. Now was not the time to mind the details; they needed to find the children first.

"I've heard from my grandparents that the village once accepted a group of people who escaped from the mountain; they should come from Coffin Village." The farmer walked out with the flashlight. "Those people are staying at the western side of the village, and the rest of us live on the east side. Normally, we have no interaction. Before my grandmother passed away, she used to tell me that those people aren't clean."

The farmer was honest and did not hide anything from Chen Ge and Ol' Wei. "At the time, I secretly mocked her for believing in something like that in this day and age. I just brushed it off as her superstition, but as time went by, I realized that there was something off about these people."

"What do you mean?" Chen Ge and Ol' Wei were curious.

"They rarely leave their homes, especially after the sun has fallen, like there are things waiting to harm them outside," the farmer said softly. "Every one of their houses has a rope hanging across the window and a cleaver hidden behind the door. I asked them once why they did that, and they said it was to prevent thieves."

“That’s all?”

“There’s also one very strange thing.” The farmer’s voice turned even smaller. “Every few days, one of them will go missing, but they never seem worried. If anything, they appear very happy just like...”

“Like what? Tell us,” Chen Ge urged.

“Just like as long as it wasn’t them who got caught.” The farmer’s words were a bit accusatory, and it made Chen Ge and Ol’ Wei silent.

“I’m just sharing my thoughts. Please don’t read too much into it!” the farmer quickly explained. The trio walked to the middle of the village and turned left. After a short walk, they saw a broken brick home.

“Here we are.” The farmer prepared to knock on the door, but when his hands fell on the door, it swung open on its own. “Elder Zhu?”

He walked into the room, but he only took one step before he froze. On the dining table facing the door sat an old man’s black and white picture. The old man’s face in the picture was looking at the door, and the scariest thing was, the eyes in the picture were gouged out.

“Don’t panic.” Chen Ge patted the farmer on his shoulder. He strode into the room without putting on the light and picked up the black and white photo from the table. “The picture looks old, and the edges are worn. He probably knew this day was coming a long time ago.”

Thinking about what the farmer said earlier, Chen Ge believed that the old man in the photo had gone missing.

*The people who escaped from Coffin Village hang rope across the window and hid a cleaver behind the door. Obviously, they are afraid of something getting in. Chen Ge scratched his chin. Could it be the monster from Coffin Village? Also why are the eyes gouged out in the picture? This is too similar to the ghost stories society’s MO.*

“Big brother, can you please put the picture down? I have a feeling he’s looking at me for some reason.” The farmer stood at the door and showed no intention of coming in. “Shall we move on to another family?”

“Sure, let’s go ask them about Elder Zhu.” The trio went to the house next door. Before they reached it, Chen Ge had a bad feeling. With Yin Yang Vision, he could clearly see that the family’s door was open. As he expected, the family residing there was also missing. Creepily enough, there was also a black and white picture on the table, and the eyes were also gouged out.

“Where are they?” The farmer led Chen Ge and Ol’ Wei here. The two outsiders didn’t say anything but the local started to panic.

“Let’s go look at the other homes first.” They looked through other homes, and it was as if all the people who escaped from Coffin Village had disappeared. There were black and white pictures on the table, and the whole village felt like a ghost village.

“What is going on?” The farmer’s face was blanched, and he turned to Chen Ge and Ol’ Wei for help. Looking at his inquisitive gaze, Chen Ge pulled out his backpack to grip the hammer. “Everyone has disappeared, but why are you still here?”

Chen Ge told the farmer that, and it honestly freaked him out. “I really don’t know! The mouth of the village still has a few families from Bai Family Village; they should be fine.”

The farmer was proven right. Only those from Coffin Village were missing.

“Chen Ge, where do you think those people have disappeared to? And why did they leave behind these black and white photos?” Ol’ Wei had a feeling that things were heading down a weird direction.

“They probably returned to the Coffin Village.” Chen Ge took out Fan Yu’s third drawing, which read—Going home.

“We cannot wait any longer. We need to enter the mountains now!” He walked to the farmer.

“Someone at the village has to know how to get to Coffin Village, right? Several lives are at risk, please show us your cooperation.”

“Brother, I really want to help you, but the people who knew about the village are either missing or dead or too old.” The farmer staggered back and stopped beside Ol’ Wei.

“Too old?” Chen Ge suddenly thought about a suitable candidate. He called Ol’ Wei and headed for the peach plantation in the mountain. “Master Bai should know where Coffin Village is!”

Hopping over the mountain, Chen Ge found Master Bai inside the wooden hut. After explaining his intention, the old man pretended not to know anything. However, when he heard two kids might have been kidnapped and taken to Coffin Village. He agreed to take them into the mountain.

### **Chapter 310: Move Faster**

“Chen Ge, should we wait for Captain Yan’s support team to come before we head into the mountain together?” Ol’ Wei looked at his phone that had no signal—the time shown was 00:50 am.

“It takes at least one hour to come from Jiujiang to Lin Guan Village. If we need to wait for them to enter the mountain, the sun will have already risen.” Chen Ge’s group had been walking through the forest for almost two hours, but there was still no sign of any village. All they could see were mountains and mountains.

“But can we do this with just the three of us?” Ol’ Wei was worried that if there was a real altercation, they probably still needed to worry about Master Bai.

“That shouldn’t be a problem.” Chen Ge had initially been worried about Master Bai’s physical condition, but after one hour of trekking, he realized that his worry was unfounded. Master Bai was healthy since he had grown up in the mountain and knew the local geography very well.

“What are you two mumbling about?” Master Bai walked in front with a branch. “A few more steps, and we’ll reach a fork in the fork. If we take the road going over the mountain top, we’ll need to walk for another two hours, but if we take the shortcut that crosses through the mountain valley, we’ll only need thirty minutes before we reach Coffin Village. Which one should we take?”

“Is the shortcut not an easy path to trek?” Chen Ge clearly understood that since Master Bai had brought it up, something had to be wrong with that path.

“Yes.” Master Bai’s face was serious. “The mountain valley is haunted.”

“Hauntings are fine. I thought you’re going to say that it is home to wolf dens.” Chen Ge patted his backpack, and the white cat poked its head out with dissatisfaction.

“Now, I’m curious. In your world, why are wolves more terrifying than ghosts?” Master Bai leaned against the branch. He could not understand Chen Ge’s way of thinking.

“Ghost are immaterial, but wolves are real.” Ol’ Wei did not believe in the talk of ghosts.

Chen Ge rolled his eyes but did not argue. “We’ll trek through the valley.”

“Are you sure? There are things in this world that can’t be explained.” Master Bai once again asked for their opinion.

“Master Bai, did something happen to you before?” Chen Ge saw the unnatural expression on the old man’s face. He was really reluctant to go through the valley. “You are very familiar with this path, so you must have taken it more than once already. We’re doing this to save the children, so I hope you won’t purposely hide something from us.”

“I’m not trying to, but I’m afraid you won’t believe me even if I tell you.” Master Bai shared the events from his youth. “My father knew a thing or two about medicine. In the forties, when there was an epidemic of the measles, he trekked through the mountains to help all the nearby villages, and it was then that he discovered Coffin Village.

“This village is isolated from the world, and there weren’t many who even knew how to read. They depended on folk remedy for their sickness, and when my father arrived, the condition of the village was very serious. To save the villagers of Coffin Village, my father paid the place several visits.

“At the time, I was still young, and my father wanted me to take over his practice. After all, a doctor is more respected than a farmer, so he would bring me on these visits. Everything was fine the first few times, but there was that one time my father got into an argument with one of the villagers. I’m not sure what the cause was.

“Normally, we left at 2 pm, but that day, when we left Coffin Village, it was already late afternoon. However, since the sun hadn’t fallen, we decided to trek through the valley. Half way through, my father suddenly urged me to move faster. All I was thinking about then was the hot meal at home, so I did run faster.

“However, after some time, my father urged me again from behind, telling me to run even faster. It was then that I realized something was wrong. I was about to turn around and ask him what was wrong when he used his hand to cover my eyes.

“All he said was for me to move faster. I peeked through the slit in his fingers, and I saw someone leaning on my father’s back!

“My father’s face was white, and he walked behind me, pushing me forward. Perhaps due to his regular acts of charity, the thing on his back didn’t harm him. However, I remember that when we entered the valley, the sky was bright, but when we exited it, the sky was completely dark.

“After that, my father fell seriously ill, and we stopped visiting Coffin Village. Even now, I have no idea what the source of the argument was or what the thing that was leaning on his back was.”

Master Bai sounded sad when he told this tale. Chen Ge understood why Master Bai would feel so guilty for not helping Jiang Ling’s sister. He had seen a ghost when he was young, so he believed these things more than most.

“Do you still plan to go through the valley?” Master Bai asked.

“The detour will take too much time; we’ll take the valley.” Chen Ge gripped the Pen Spirit. “The two of you can walk in, and I’ll close up the back.”

“Are you sure you can do that?” Originally, that was the role assigned to Ol’ Wei. He had been making marks on trees as they moved through the forest. Master Bai wanted to advise Chen Ge, but he remembered what had happened that night. Chen Ge chased Jiang Ling’s sister out of the room and even seemed like he was trying to communicate with her. The old man’s lips twitched. Now he suspected that Chen Ge had purposely told them to use the shortcut through the valley because he heard it was haunted.

“Why are you two looking at me? Don’t worry, let’s go.” Chen Ge did not feel panic. His backpack had a white cat, so if the ghost wanted to have someone to lean on, it would attack the white cat first. He nuzzled the cat’s head gently before following Master Bai and Ol’ Wei into the valley.

The trees became more common and twisted like everything around them was changing.

“Move faster, we must leave within twenty minutes.” Master Bai’s emotions were shaking. He looked nervous, probably because the memory from his youth was returning.

“Chen Ge, you be careful at the back.” Ol’ Wei walked in the middle. Although he gave Chen Ge a reminder, he did have some faith in the lad. They walked for five minutes before the narrow path became completely covered by brush and branches. They could see half-buried coffins by the side of the road. The coffins looked like they were placed there on purpose. Some of them were not even closed.

“Don’t be afraid.” Master Bai’s voice was shaking. He forced himself to calm down. “This is Coffin Village’s tradition. These are all empty coffins. They line the side of the road in increasing height, representing moving higher in life.”

“Not really afraid, but I agree that we should move faster.”

Chen Ge turned to look behind him, and a shadow seemed to be trailing them. He did not tell Ol’ Wei or Master Bai about this. He rummaged in his bag for something.

*Only one? Don’t say I’m bullying you with my advantage in numbers.*