

Horrors 311

Chapter 311: You Done Crying?

Master Bai and Ol' Wei rushed ahead, but Chen Ge purposely slowed down to put some distance between them. *This should be good enough. Ol' Wei and Master Bai are still in my sight; I don't need to worry about losing them.*

Chen Ge placed the recorder in his hand but did not look back; he just pretended like nothing was happening. The wind in the valley stilled, and the surroundings became quiet, as if they had gone through some limit and entered a different world. The temperature dropped, and Chen Ge could feel a cold draft encroaching. *It's coming.*

Perhaps because he had the white cat as a meat shield, Chen Ge walked forward with ease. When the cold draft was just three meters away from Chen Ge, it suddenly stopped like it could sense something.

I haven't even turned the recorder on yet—why did it stop? Chen Ge gauged the distance in his heart. He pretended like he was afraid and scared, shaking too much to move forward. He slowed down again, trying his best to 'lure' the ghost to attack him.

Why isn't it coming? Does it want me to lean back to knock into it? Chen Ge was seriously considering walking backward. He had confidence in his acting, but he was afraid his unusual movement might scare the monster off. *I should wait a little while longer.*

The road narrowed, and it was almost swallowed up by brush and branches. Even Master Bai and Ol' Wei had to slow down to deal with the blockage. Chen Ge knew that he could not make it too obvious. If the monster was not going to take his bait, then so be it. He walked forward to help Master Bai.

However, the moment he picked up speed—perhaps panicking—the monster finally made its move. Chilliness climbed all over his heart, and this familiar feeling reminded Chen Ge of his first date when Zhang Ya stood behind him. The hairs on his neck rose, and the temperature dropped even more as iciness surrounded him.

Before Chen Ge could do anything, the white cat in his backpack suddenly squeezed its way out. It meowed at him twice before running away!

You coward! Don't they say cats have nine lives?

Well, at least the white cat warned him before it left. The chill grabbed Chen Ge's shoulders like a pair of hands.

This feels familiar.

A woman's sobbing came from behind Chen Ge. It sounded scary and sad. Weirdly enough, it seemed like only Chen Ge could hear this. Master Bai and Ol' Wei were busy with their own stuff and did not seem to hear anything.

Iciness curled into his heart, and his shoulders slowly slumped from the pressure. Chen Ge was reminded of Master Bai's story. The old man's father should have been experiencing this kind of pain

then. To protect Master Bai, he had forced himself to carry the ghost the entire journey. His body turned heavier, and there was a pulling force coming from behind him like it was trying to pull Chen Ge into one of the open coffins.

Is it what they call a scapegoat? The air seemed to freeze into ice, and it froze up Chen Ge's lungs. The crying beside his ears influenced Chen Ge's thought. The trees around him moved like they were coming alive. The sobbing echoed in Chen Ge's mind, and a pale white face slowly appeared from Chen Ge's back. It leaned toward Chen Ge's ears, but before it could say anything, Chen Ge suddenly turned around.

"You done crying?"

The face stopped on Chen Ge's shoulders, its dark abyss of a mouth wide open.

"If you're done crying, then be on your way." Chen Ge pressed the recorder, and Xu Yin appeared in half a red shirt to yank the monster off from Chen Ge's back. Before it could resist, it was torn into pieces and consumed by Xu Yin!

The screams echoed through the woods, and even Chen Ge thought Xu Yin was a bit cruel. "If you're not done crying, why didn't you tell me? I'm a reasonable person."

When Xu Yin finished his feast, the blood stain on his shirt grew. Based on this speed, it would not be long until he became a real Red Specter.

"Chen Ge! What are you doing back there! Don't stay too far from us!" Master Bai waved at Chen Ge. They did not notice anything weird until Xu Yin disappeared. With their sense of alertness, without Chen Ge, both of them would have been pulled into the coffins already.

"Coming!" Chen Ge pocketed the recorder, and the white cat, which had escaped earlier, returned. It jumped on Chen Ge's shoulder and refused to enter the backpack again.

"A life of contentment has dulled your survival instincts. You weren't this cowardly before. Looks like I'll need to bring you out with me more in the future." Chen Ge nudged the cat's face. "This is for your own good."

After catching up to Ol' Wei, Chen Ge suddenly realized that since the ghost had been eaten directly by Xu Yin, he was not even sure what kind of power it had. *It's probably a normal ghost. There's so many coffins—it should have friends.*

With Master Bai leading way, they used twenty minutes to exit the valley.

"Thank God nothing happened." Master Bai was covered in cold sweat. "We were lucky this time. We'll reach the place after ten minutes or so. Before entering the Coffin Village, let me go talk to them first." He stared at Chen Ge. "After we're in the village, no matter what happens, do not act rashly! I'm considered a village friend, let me handle this."

"You've been back here for decades already, do you think they will still give you face? Furthermore, the villagers knew you might not even be alive anymore." Chen Ge was telling the truth.

"In comparison, I know about their culture better than you do. We're here to find people, not to wage a war. It's better not to make enemies." Master Bai tried his best to advise Chen Ge. He was afraid that he might do something dumb.

"We'll do what you say." Ol' Wei dragged Chen Ge. "Finding the children is more important."

Master Bai did not continue this topic. He pointed the cat on Chen Ge's shoulders. "Keep your cat inside your bag or else the villagers will kill it on sight."

"They don't keep cats to deal with rats? Don't you say every family has a coffin? Aren't they afraid rats might bite through the wood?" Chen Ge chased the cat for a long time before he caught it and shoved it inside the bag.

"There are not many living creatures inside this village. In fact, I've not seen them rear livestock," the old man said. "I'll tell you about it as we walk. The village has many weird taboos, and they look different from normal humans, so you'd better be prepared."

Chapter 312: Don't Knock on the Door at Night

After leaving the valley, his phone completely lost its signal. The electric compass that Chen Ge downloaded beforehand malfunctioned as well. Something told him that the world inside and outside the valley were different. Perhaps because he had met plenty of ghosts, he was sensitive to these things. He tipped his head back and glanced through the canopy. There was no moon or stars in the sky. The night was like a cloth smothering them no matter where they went.

"Be careful, we've almost reached the place." After another ten minutes of walking, Chen Ge's group finally left the jungle. They looked down the horizon, and what they saw confused and shocked them.

"Those are... lanterns?" Ol' Wei touched Master Bai's shoulder, but this was also the first time Master Bai had come to Coffin Village at night.

"I have no clue." He took out a piece of jade and wore it around his neck. "I'll scout ahead. Stay close to me; don't wander off."

The three of them walked toward the village, and the shapes of the buildings became clearer and clearer. No one would have expected a village to be hidden in such a desolate place. All the buildings were built in a style from decades ago; they looked old and abandoned, but the most curious point was every family had a white lantern hanging before the door.

The lanterns were like white eyeballs, hanging by the side of the road, staring at the three newcomers.

There were people inside the village!

This village that was supposedly abandoned decades ago due to an epidemic still had people living there.

"Master Bai, are you going to enter just like this?" Ol' Wei moved to stand beside Chen Ge. He still remembered Captain Yan's order. His mission that night was to protect Chen Ge.

"Let me think about this." Master Bai looked at the empty village and the white lanterns that lined the road, and his palms were covered with cold sweat. "In the past, my father always came in the morning, so I had no idea this is how Coffin Village looks at night."

With the bitter smile on his face, Master Bai's meaning was clear; he did not want to enter the village. Of the three of them, he was the only one who had entered Coffin Village before. He understood the creepiness of the village, and if morning was already so scary, night did not bear thinking about.

"Don't panic, we don't need to enter directly." Ol' Wei then patted Chen Ge on his shoulder. "How about we take a look around the village first?"

Chen Ge did not answer, and he stood at the back of the party alone. His expression was unreadable.

"What's wrong with you?" Ol' Wei was worried about Chen Ge. Even though he admitted Chen Ge could be a bit rash, he had to admit that facing the entrance to this ghost village, standing beside Chen Ge gave him the most security.

"I'm thinking about something." Chen Ge shrugged and lowered his head to look at the black phone. When they neared the village, Chen Ge's black phone had vibrated, and he had received a new message.

"Congratulations, Specter's Favored! You've found Coffin Village deep inside the mountain. Do you wish to accept the Trial Mission for the three-star scenario, Coffin Village?"

"What's on your mind, why don't you share it with us?" Ol' Wei and Master Bai walked close to him.

"Thanks, but I've already made up my mind." Chen Ge clicked on the accept key.

"Coffin Village (three-star scenario): Survive until morning inside Coffin Village, and the new scenario will be unlocked.

"Mission Hint: That day, other than me, they all came."

Memorizing the mission hint, Chen Ge pocketed the black phone and turned to look at Coffin Village, shrouded in darkness. "Let's go, we'll go take a look."

"Are you sure?" Ol' Wei grabbed Chen Ge's arm and gave Master Bai a look, hoping that the old man would help him convince Chen Ge. However, the night was too dark for Master Bai to see it.

"I've already made up my mind." Chen Ge's consideration was different from Ol' Wei's.

"Stop arguing. It should be fine for us to enter the village. Even though the villagers look strange, they're quite kind." Master Bai had interacted with Coffin Village's people before, so he had the most right to speak.

"Master Bai, are you sure these kind villagers would light white lanterns at night?" Of the three, Ol' Wei was the most rational.

Master Bai touched the jade around his neck like he was remembering something from long ago, "My father once told me, a bunch of poor people are living inside the village. He said that when I master medicine, I should go help them."

When Chen Ge's Yin Yang Vision caught sight of Master Jade's Jade Necklace, he felt pain in his eye. However, that pain only lasted for a second. If he was not sensitive enough, he would not have noticed it.

"Master Bai, your father left you the necklace?"

"Yes, he would wear it whenever he went out to help people. After we came out from Coffin Village for the last time, he gave it to me and then soon after he fell ill."

There's more to this necklace than meets the eye. Chen Ge wanted to study it. He had run into ghosts and monsters many times already and had been trying to find something that could affect them. He had been searching for weeks, but he had only found a butcher's cleaver.

"My father said that others cannot touch the jade or it'll lose its powers." Master Bai seemed to be telling the truth. "I cannot give you the necklace, so you'd better stay close to me tonight."

"Master Bai, can you remember other things that your father told you?" Ol' Wei asked. "We're entering the village, so you need to tell us everything."

"That's all I believe. He told me, no matter where I go, I have to face my conscience and those with a clean conscience will be protected by both humans and ghosts." When he said so, Chen Ge understood why the old man was so focused on helping Jiang Ling and her sister; Master Bai's family was good-hearted people.

Chen Ge had his own philosophy and had been following his own conscience. *He has a point, but ghosts are like people; there are good ghosts and evil ghosts.*

The three walked around the outer perimeter of Coffin Village. The village was very big. To get an overall view of the village, they needed to climb up to the adjacent hill.

"There are probably more than a hundred families living inside the village. Be careful not to get into an altercation with them." Master Bai was mainly talking to Chen Ge. "We'll go in through the entrance; there's no need to hide."

Thus, the three entered Coffin Village. The road was overgrown with grass, and the houses on both sides were closed. Weirdly enough, the doors were not pasted with the common pictures of door guardians but white paper with the character '福' (good fortune) turned upside down. It looked scary.

"The culture here seems to be the total opposite of the outside world." Chen Ge stopped before one of the doors. "Shall we go in?"

"It's rude to barge in like that." Ol' Wei moved his hand to the gun in his holster. This place gave him plenty of pressure.

"We're here to look for the children. Eventually we need to interact with the villagers. We will need Master Bai's help to liaise with them." Chen Ge raised his arm, and when his hand almost reached the door, the white lantern hanging above the door suddenly went out.

Chapter 313: Three Rooms

The sudden disappearance of the light cast where Chen Ge's group was standing into darkness.

"What's happening?" Both Master Bai and Ol' Wei were spooked. Chen Ge's hand hung in midair and did not fall on the door. "I'm not sure. It doesn't seem like a coincidence."

There was no wind, and the lantern was hung high enough that they would notice if someone reached out to extinguish the light. The other white lanterns swayed even though there was still no wind.

It felt weirdly suffocating.

Chen Ge and Ol' Wei turned to look at Master Bai, but he had not experienced this before either. "Shall we retreat for now?"

He walked two steps back and turned to look down the road, then he stopped. "Be careful, someone's coming!"

"Who?" Chen Ge looked down the direction Master Bai was looking. Under the glow of the swaying lanterns, a blurry human-shaped shadow slowly approached them. "It seems to be waving at us?"

The shadow moved faster, and Chen Ge finally got a good look at it. It was an old lady who was wearing a dark-colored jacket. She kept her head lowered as she moved forward, and she only stopped when she almost ran into Chen Ge.

"You also came from the outside?" The old lady's voice was weird and made Chen Ge feel uncomfortable.

Noticing the old lady's choice of words, Chen Ge asked in return, "Also? There's another party that entered the village earlier?"

"Yes." The woman kept her head lowered when she spoke like she was afraid of others seeing her face. Chen Ge was reminded of Jiang Ling's sister. The villagers of Coffin Village were born with abnormalities, so Chen Ge would not be rude enough to purposely sneak a look at the old lady's face.

"Was it a middle-aged man and two kids who entered the village before us?" Chen Ge asked a follow-up question, but the old lady ignored him. It seemed like she was not there for Chen Ge. Keeping her head lowered, it felt like the old lady's head was almost falling to the ground. However, she did not seem bothered by this. "Don't knock on the door at night. It might not be people who answer the door."

It was unclear who the old lady was talking to. She blocked them in the middle of the road, and the lanterns on both sides swayed harder.

"Things have been complicated in the village lately. Don't wander about. Come with me, I'll bring you somewhere to stay." The old lady turned to head back in the direction she came from. Her steps were small, but she moved fast. Combined with her head that almost reached her chest, the whole thing was just weird.

"Shall we follow her?" Ol' Wei turned to look at Chen Ge and Master Bai. When he saw the old lady earlier, he already wanted to leave.

"Let's follow her for now." It was Master Bai who spoke. "I feel familiar around the old lady. Is it possible that I've seen her when I came to visit as a child?"

Master Bai walked ahead, and Chen Ge as well as Ol' Wei followed behind him. The old lady led them deeper into Coffin Village. They took several turns before they stopped. "Tonight, you can stay here. We can discuss the rest when morning comes."

She still kept her head lowered, and the tone of her voice had not changed; it felt like they were talking to a puppet. "There are three rooms inside the house. Each of you can take one. Remember to stay inside your room, and do not share rooms. Do not touch the rope on the window or the cleaver behind the door. Stay in bed and wait for the night to pass."

"One room each? We'll share one room; it'll be fine for one night." Master Bai had to stay close to Chen Ge. If he did not keep a good watch on him, he would run off on his own.

"There are three rooms inside the house; each of you can take one..." To their surprise, when Master Bai said so, the old lady only repeated her earlier instruction, but this time, her tone was uglier.

"Granny, we're here to look for two children. We have no time to waste, especially not until morning. Can you bring us to meet the other group who came from outside?" Chen Ge studied the old woman and could not find anything weird about her. Could it really be her face?

When the old lady turned around, Chen Ge bent down to glance at her face. The face was totally normal.

The eyes are still there, and the face looks normal, but she does look familiar, Chen Ge thought to himself. He looked at the old lady and then glanced at Master Bai. "Master Bai, you said the old lady gives you a sense of familiarity, could she be from Lin Guan Village?"

"I didn't see her face, but based on her attire, you might be right." Master Bai pushed the door open. The place was not big.

"Looks like someone from Lin Guan Village and familiar to you and me." Chen Ge thought about it, and his face slowly changed. "Wait, I know who she is!"

"Who?"

"Ol' Wei, do you still remember the first home we visited when we arrived at Lin Guan Village?"

"Yes, the owner was a middle-aged farmer." Ol' Wei had good memory.

"He has a shrine in his room, and an old lady's black-and-white photo sat on it." Chen Ge kept his voice lowered. "The old lady who showed us the way earlier looks exactly like the old woman in that picture!"

"How is that possible? Are you sure?" Ol' Wei couldn't believe Chen Ge.

"Now that you mention it, she does look like an old lady from Lin Guan Village!" Master Bai made the connection in his mind. "But that old lady died a long time ago!"

"No matter what, it has happened." Chen Ge calmed down quickly. "If the old lady is not a living person, then should we still stay in the home that she assigned for us?"

The white paper on the door fluttered. Neither Master Bai nor Ol' Wei could not make the decision.

"Let's go in to take a look first. The old lady had a good relationship with me before she died; she won't harm us.

"At least, I think she won't."

Chen Ge's group entered the home, and the place was similar to other houses, but there was not a white lantern outside the door.

"This isn't like what the old lady said; there's only one room in here." Chen Ge walked in front, and after crossing the empty courtyard, he opened the inner room door.

A weird smell drifted out from the room. When they got used to it, the three of them turned to look inside the room with their eyes bulging. Inside the home's only room sat three black coffins.

"One home, three rooms? Could the old lady be referring to the coffins?" Ol' Wei's face was completely white. "Something is seriously not right with this place; we should leave."

Chapter 314: Inversion

"Since we're already here..." Chen Ge walked toward the coffins.

"Calm down!" Master Bai grabbed Chen Ge. "Those are for dead people!"

He was a bit loud, and Ol' Wei came to stop both of them. "This place is off; we need to be very careful."

"The three rooms mentioned by the old lady should be these three coffins. She's not a living person, so for her, coffins are rooms." Chen Ge pried Master Bai's hand off calmly. "Is there something wrong with my logic?"

"The problem is..." Master Bai and Ol' Wei did not know how to communicate with Chen Ge.

After a long pause, Ol' Wei asked, "Aren't you afraid around these things?"

"Of course, I am, but fear is not going to help us in this situation, is it?" Chen Ge looked at Ol' Wei.

"Don't let it get to you. Come help me."

The three walked to the coffins. They were roughly made, and they had a layer of dark brown coating. There was a light smell.

"Is that decomposition?" Master Bai looked at Ol' Wei.

"No, decomposition is much worse. This should be the smell of decaying wood." Knowing Chen Ge would not leave that easily, Ol' Wei quickly got into the correct frame of mind. After all, he was an experienced police officer and would be dependable during the crucial moment. "Listen to me, we cannot believe the old lady fully. We'd better be careful.

"When we were led this way, I memorized the route. The three of us will stay here for now, but if danger comes, we'll run out immediately. Remember to follow behind me, and make sure not to get left behind!"

"There's only one way to find out whether the old woman was lying or not." Chen Ge put his hands on the coffin lid.

"What are you doing?"

"Opening the coffin." Chen Ge pushed, and the lid slid off a little.

"You seriously plan to sleep here with one of the coffins?"

"It depends." Chen Ge pushed the coffin half open, and he peered in. It had a set of graveclothes at the bottom of the coffin.

"Don't touch it! This is a real taboo. What if you offend the spirits?" Master Bai held Chen Ge's hands tightly, and Ol' Wei also ran over to pull Chen Ge back.

"I just want to see what's so mysterious about this place." Ol' Wei and Master Bai sighed when they finally got Chen Ge to calm down. However, what Chen Ge said next got them all worried again. "My plan is to open all the coffins we find in this village. The village's biggest secret should be inside the coffins."

"Please don't say something like that when you're outside; I'm afraid the villagers might kill you if they hear you." Master Bai walked to stand beside the coffin. He thought about closing the coffin, but when he glanced at the clothes inside, his brows locked. "Why are their graveclothes bright red?"

"Yes, that confused me when I first saw it too, so I planned to take it out to have a closer look." Chen Ge joined Master Bai. "White lantern above the door, white paper on the door, red graveclothes; this village seems to invert all the common Chinese practices. This reminds me of Minghun."

"You even know about Minghun?" Master Bai glanced at Chen Ge.

"One of the scenarios at my Haunted House is Minghun-themed. A living bride for a dead groom..."

Chen Ge wanted to continue the story when both Master Bai and Ol' Wei waved at him to stop. "That's enough, it's already scary enough."

The two of them stood beside the coffin, looking inside at the red graveclothes, and it just did not feel right.

BANG!

A sudden noise spooked Master Bai and Ol' Wei. They turned and saw Chen Ge was pushing the other two coffins open. Three coffins meant three set of red graveclothes. As they shone the flashlight at them, it looked like the coffins were bleeding.

"All the sizes are different, there's for male and female. Looks like a family of three." Chen Ge stood beside the coffin, "I'm wondering, the coffins are inside the house, so where are the bodies?"

He turned to ask Master Bai, "Could this be one of Coffin Village's cultures? Every family will prepare a living coffin even when they're still alive?"

"I suppose so." Master Bai could not be sure.

“There aren’t any bodies inside the coffins, and if this is really a living coffin, then it means that the owners are still alive.” Chen Ge scratched his chin. “What do you think the chances are that they will return tonight? How will they react when they see we’re inside their home?”

He was just asking that, but Master Bai and Ol’ Wei each sucked in a cold breath.

“Perhaps it’ll be good if they return; we can ask them what’s going on with the village.” Master Bai still insisted that Coffin Village’s people could be communicated with.

“Special times call for special measures. Would normal people leave their home in the middle of the night inside a deep mountain?” Chen Ge gave his suggestion. “I think we should ambush them at the door and capture them when they walk in. They’re a family of three, and there’s three of us. After detaining them, remember to keep their mouths shut. Shove them inside the coffins, and we’ll use the graveclothes to bind them. Then we can start the interrogation.”

Chen Ge gave his plan, but Master Bai and Ol’ Wei looked at him with weird expressions.

“That isn’t good, right? They haven’t done anything bad to us after all.” Master Bai was an honest man. He moved away from Chen Ge and stood beside Ol’ Wei. At a time like this, he felt better siding with the police.

“It’ll be too late to react when we realize they want to harm us. This is called taking the initiative.” Chen Ge said so and moved to stand behind the door. He appeared masterful as he readied himself for the ambush, as if he had done this many times already. “Ol’ Wei, you can hide under the window, and Master Bai, you hide beside the second coffin. I checked it earlier—that corner is perfectly hidden from sight.”

“Who did you learn all this from?” Ol’ Wei and Master Bai moved to their spots. For some reason, they followed Chen Ge’s instruction.

“I operate a Haunted House, and the best skill is to make use of the geography to scare the visitors.” Chen Ge looked through the slit into the small courtyard. “You two can rest for a while; it must have been tiring walking for so long already.”

“Okay, we’ll do this one hour each, so everyone can have the chance to rest.” Ol’ Wei suggested.

Master Bai nodded. “No problem, I might be old, but I’m still healthy. I should be able to survive one sleepless night.”

“There’s no need.” Chen Ge turned back from the door to look at Ol’ Wei and Master Bai. He reached into his backpack to sooth the angry white cat. “Shush, they’re coming.”

Chapter 315: Look Up

Ol’ Wei and Master Bai zipped up their lips and held their breath. Chen Ge grabbed the hammer’s handle in his backpack and turned his eyes back to the door. Along the dark road, a cold misty light was getting closer. “What is that?”

The light stopped at the front door and filtered into the courtyard through the slit in the door.

CREAK...

The front door was pushed open. There was nothing outside the house; there was no one at the door. The only change was an additional white lantern hanging on the door. When Chen Ge's group entered the house, there had definitely not been a white lantern. Inside this village, the lantern seemed to have some special importance.

"They're coming in?" The white lantern shone a pale light on the floor. There was no one in the courtyard, but there were three shadows on the floor, two tall and one short. The shadows flickered in the courtyard, and they did not seem to notice the three outsiders hiding inside the room.

A cold draft picked up, and the front door closed on its own. When the pale light disappeared, three strange creatures appeared. Their heads were pressed to their chests, and they walked forward on tip-toe. The unkempt hair blocked their faces, and their clothes were stained with blood. They were radiating a strange stench.

It's similar to the smell at the Third Sick Hall! They've been inside the door?

Chen Ge signaled for Ol' Wei and Master Bai to hide. The three creatures stood in the middle of the courtyard, and as Chen Ge expected, there were two adults and one child. The way they were standing was very weird. They leaned forward like they would topple into the room at any moment.

The atmosphere was tense.

As time passed, the three creatures outside the room seemed to sense something. They moved forward at the same time and walked to the door with a weird gait. Since they were just separated by a door, Chen Ge could see the pattern on their clothes. The three shadows did not enter the room but stopped at the door.

The two adults kept their heads lowered, but the child had a paper doll in its hands. It kept using its fingers to tear on the doll, and whenever he did so, the paper doll seemed to come alive, its expression filled with pain as it begged for mercy. However, the child did not stop. If anything, it continued to find other ways to 'play' with the doll.

It seems like there's a name on the doll.

With his Yin Yang Vision, Chen Ge could see the name on the doll, and he felt like he had seen that name in Lin Guan Village. *Wait, could the doll be one of the people who disappeared from Lin Guan Village?*

There was a bunch of Coffin Village's escapees that settled at Lin Guan Village, but other than themselves, no one knew the real reason they escaped from Coffin Village. The shadows stopped at the door for several seconds. Seemingly intent on investigating if there were people hiding inside the room, one of the shadows walked to the window.

Chen Ge could clearly see the lowered head stick itself to the window and use it to push the wooden windowpane open. The sticky hair dangled downward. It planned to poke its head in!

At the time, Ol' Wei was squatting below the window. He did not know there was another head just above his own. Chen Ge looked at Ol' Wei, but his expression did not change. Ol' Wei saw Chen Ge looking at him, and based on the young man's expression, he thought everything was fine.

The hair touched Ol' Wei's neck, and he even reached out to scratch it. Ol' Wei's hand practically brushed past the face above his head. Master Bai, who hid behind the coffin, saw everything. His lips were chattering, and he tried his best to alert Ol' Wei.

Perhaps Ol' Wei also felt that something was wrong. He moved his eyes away from Chen Ge and turned to Master Bai. Master Bai reached out one finger, and he kept pointing upward; it was hard to miss the hint.

Above me? Ol' Wei reached out to touch his head, but he did not find anything. Since Master Bai kept pointing up, he raised his hands upward. Behind the door, Chen Ge gripped the hammer. His original plan had been to wait for the ghost to reach half of his body in before he made his move, but Ol' Wei had pushed his plan forward.

As Chen Ge expected, under Master Bai's instruction, Ol' Wei's hands kept moving upward. His fingertips touched something, and it felt very cold. His neck froze, and Ol' Wei slowly turned his head upward. He leaped back and looked right into the male ghost's eyes.

"Now!" Chen Ge pressed the recorder and swung the hammer at the window above Ol' Wei's head!

Almost at the same time, the three ghosts attacked from the door and window. The ghost that was closest to Ol' Wei peeled his mouth back. Blood vessels moved within it as he tried to bite Ol' Wei's face.

Ol' Wei, who had been wondering what was above him one second earlier, did not have chance to react. He did not even have time to show fear when the ghost's mouth opened wide. He was about to scream when a scary-looking hammer flew past his head!

BANG!

Chen Ge did not hold back, and the hammer landed right on the ghost's face. It sent the ghost flying along with the window frame!

"My god..." Ol' Wei had not even closed his lips, and Chen Ge also fell out of the room with a man wearing half a red shirt standing beside him. After the ghost at the window was knocked out of the room, the two shadows raised their heads. The dead faces exposed vicious expressions. They wanted to charge into the room, but Chen Ge was running at them.

The battle ended as soon as it started. In less than one second, Xu Yin already got two of the shadows on the ground. Xu Yin was maddened by bloodlust. He did not have the habit of leaving things alive, so the two shadows soon became blood stains on his shirt.

The last shadow landed on all fours. It was about to clamber out when it was pressed down from behind by Xu Yin. The whole process took, at most, ten seconds. During that time, the only thing Chen Ge could do was turn around to close the door.

Xu Yin seems to have gotten stronger.

The shirt knitted with blood stuck to his body. Xu Yin was like a lonely pianist, waving his tapered fingers to flick the blood off his hands. His body disappeared as Chen Ge turned the recorder off.

"What happened earlier?" Ol' Wei and Master Bai ran out of the room. They were covered in cold sweat, and panic was apparent on their faces.

"I don't know either." Chen Ge shrugged. "When I gave chase after them, the three shadows immediately left the place."

He pointed at the open front door and picked up the hammer. "We should be more careful. We made a loud commotion earlier—perhaps more monsters will be coming."

"Do you know the meaning of the word 'careful'?" Ol' Wei touched his head as he looked at the hammer in Chen Ge's hand. He could not believe that thing flew inches away from his head earlier.

Chapter 316: Graveclothes

"That was to save you." Chen Ge shoved the hammer back into his backpack. "The escape of the three shadows means that we've been exposed; we cannot stay here any longer."

"We're finally leaving?" Ol' Wei had been wanting to leave for a long time already.

"Coffin Village is very quiet at night, so our fight earlier must have echoed very far. I'm afraid other monsters might hear that and come to surround us." Chen Ge had his own plan. "The first reaction of the earlier three monsters when they saw us was to attack. This goes to show that it wasn't out of kindness the old lady led us here. The villagers here are not as kind as Master Bai assumed."

Master Bai disagreed with Chen Ge. "I haven't been inside Coffin Village at night before, but I don't understand this change. In my memory, Coffin Village's real villagers would not do something like this; they're no different from normal people."

"Master Bai, you haven't been back here for years already; you don't know what happened when you were gone, so we'd better be careful." Chen Ge looked around and bent over to pick up the paper doll on the floor. The paper doll that had been tormented by the boy had its limbs almost torn off, and its expression was one of pain.

"Zhu Fengxi?" There was a name on the back of the doll. It was unknown what kind of ink it was, but based on Chen Ge's experience, it felt like dried blood.

"This name is rather familiar." Master Bai moved close to Chen Ge to take a look at the doll. "He sounds like one of the escapes from Coffin Village."

"The dolls have the names of the escapees." Chen Ge related this to the weird phenomena he had observed at Lin Guan Village. Many old houses had a cleaver behind the door and a rope by the window. Combining that with what had happened to them inside the house, he had a brief understanding why things were that way.

If a monster tried to crawl in through the window, then the rope was to tie around their neck, and the cleaver behind the door was for self-defense. The more isolated the village, the weirder the tradition—that was the only way Chen Ge could interpret these traditions.

Those who escaped from Coffin Village spent their days in fear. Could the thing that cause that fear be the ghost from Coffin Village? If they were captured, would they end up as paper dolls to be tormented eternally?

Chen Ge had another question that needed to be answer. *Why did these people escape from Coffin Village in the first place? What kind of event transpired at this old village to cause a mass exodus?*

To know all that, I'll need to find a villager to ask. Chen Ge pocketed the paper doll. "I have a plan to discuss with you."

"Tell me."

"First, we leave this village."

"Okay." Ol' Wei and Master Bai nodded. They also felt that the village was too dangerous.

"Then, we'll inspect each house, starting from the ones near the entrance, moving inwards. No matter what we come across, we must detain them." There was a sparkle in Chen Ge's eyes. "As long as we don't make too much noise, we should be able to take them down one by one."

Chen Ge had given his plan much thought. Whenever Xu Yin consumed a ghost, the blood stain on his clothes increased. Based on this progression, there was a high chance of him turning into a real Red Specter that night!

There was a great power difference between a normal Specter and a Red Specter. Without a Red Specter by his side, Chen Ge did not feel safe.

"You're planning to demolish a whole village?" Ol' Wei was a police officer, so he frowned when he heard Chen Ge's suggestion. However, Master Bai had gotten used to Chen Ge's crazy ideas.

"We should leave the village first before we decide what to do." Master Bai walked ahead, his hand holding the jade. A pale-faced Ol' Wei followed behind Master Bai, but Chen Ge stood where he was. After the three monsters were consumed by Xu Yin, the white cat did not return to normal. It was still hissing and scratching the backpack.

Something is still nearby. Chen Ge looked around him. A human head seemed to flash across the left wall of the room with the coffins.

The room next door? Chen Ge did not stay and walked out.

White lanterns hung on both sides of the road, shining a pale light. For some reason, Chen Ge had a feeling the number of white lanterns had increased. *What is the meaning of these lanterns? If there's a white lantern, meaning the place is occupied?*

"Chen Ge, why aren't you coming?"

"Coming." Chen Ge passed the door next door, and he turned to look. The wooden door was locked, and weirdly enough, there was not a white lantern on this door. *The thing I saw earlier wasn't a ghost?*

Chen Ge maintained his distance from Ol' Wei and Master Bai, but he kept his attention on the road behind him. When he turned the corner and Chen Ge would be lost behind the wall, he slowed down, leaned back, and glanced down the corner. The door had been opened, and bright red graveclothes dangled at the door.

To not expose himself, Chen Ge stopped for less than one second, but his heart was gripped with concern. "The graveclothes moved on their own?"

They continued walking through the weird village decorated with white lanterns, followed by the red graveclothes. The wind blew, and it carried out voices from the houses on both sides. It sounded like laughter and tears. If one paid more attention, there was also the sound of chewing. As the night deepened, the village became creepier.

Other places become quieter at night, but this place is completely different. The later it gets, the livelier it becomes. Chen Ge tried to remember the ghosts that he had met that night. *The ghost who wanted to drag me into the coffin inside the valley and the family of three seem to be different. In comparison, the one inside the village is smarter.*

They had been inside Coffin Village less than half an hour, but so many weird things happened already. Chen Ge suspected that a blood door was hiding inside this village, and it was a door that was wide open without anyone watching over it!

If we search the houses one by one, eventually, we'll find that home in Fan Yu's drawing.

When Chen Ge turned the next corner, he glanced behind him. The graveclothes were collapsed on the floor and closer to them.

Being chased by clothes worn by dead people doesn't feel good. Chen Ge reached for the recorder, and he bumped into Ol' Wei. "Why did you stop?"

"Something is wrong..." Ol' Wei looked at completely unfamiliar street, and his face turned paler. "The road that we used earlier seemed to have disappeared."

"We're lost?" Chen Ge thought about it and patted Ol' Wei on his shoulder. "Don't worry, we only need to ask for directions."

"This place has more ghosts than people; who are you going to ask?" Ol' Wei said, but there was no reply. He turned around and saw Chen Ge walking away with the hammer.

Chapter 317: Baby

"Don't move away on your own! Slow down!" Ol' Wei grabbed Master Bai and rushed after Chen Ge. Their combined age was more than one hundred, but they tried to keep up.

"I'm just trying to ask for directions, why are you guys following me?" Chen Ge did not want to expose Xu Yin before Ol' Wei, so he moved his finger away from the recorder.

"There are no living souls in this village; who are you going to ask?" Ol' Wei was worried that Chen Ge might do something stupid like using the hammer to break down the door of some of the houses.

"You'll see." Chen Ge told Ol' Wei to keep quiet. He leaned against the wall by the corner. He counted his heartbeat and tightened his grip on the hammer. He waited for a full minute, but the red graveclothes did not show up. Chen Ge leaned forward, and the clothes had already disappeared. "It ran away?"

It had probably heard Ol' Wei's voice, so it had gone into hiding. Chen Ge leaned back against the wall and considered his next course of action.

Coffin Village is a three-star scenario, but the fright level so far hasn't reached the standard of a three-star scenario. Chen Ge looked at the many houses that were no different from one another. *Making us lose our way is just the beginning. The monsters inside this village are slowly waking up.*

There had to be a Red Specter in the village somewhere!

That was what Chen Ge worried about the most; he knew how dangerous those two words could be.

Temporarily, there is no better option. I'll need to continue this investigation and feed the stragglers to Xu Yin. If he can transform into a Red Specter tonight, even if I fail the mission, not all is lost. Chen Ge was a good person, but he was afraid of running into a bad Red Specter. If Xu Yin consumed so many spirits inside the village, it might anger the Specter.

Chen Ge calculated the ghosts that he had, and the only one he could depend on was Xu Yin. The newly acquired Yan Danian might be a Lesser Red Specter, but his last power had not been unlocked. Furthermore, based on his usual appearance, he did not look like a particularly aggressive spirit. If he was torn apart by the Red Specter, then Chen Ge would cry for a long time.

I'll need to be careful. Chen Ge reminded himself and turned toward Master Bai. "The monsters inside the village are rousing. You've been here before; do you know if there are any special buildings at this place?"

"There's an ancestral hall at the deepest part of the village; the place is forbidden to outsiders. The village has many wells, but the villagers normally go to the other side of the mountain to gather fresh water instead of using the wells. They gave wells a wide berth." Master Bai tried his best to jog his memory. "There's also another strange thing. This village has no village elder; the one who looked over everyone was a woman. She wasn't old and lived at the largest house alone."

"Forbidding outsiders from going to the ancestral hall is understandable, but why are they afraid of wells? Is the water tainted? Does the water caused the abnormalities?" Chen Ge was confused.

"The water was fine. My father once used a captured animal to test it out, and it was normal water. However, the villagers refused to drink it and even forbade us from doing more testing." Master Bai also did not know why.

"We have to pay attention to these places; the more they stop us from getting close to these places, the higher the chance they're hiding something."

"Okay, so where shall we go now?" Completely lost with the white lanterns swaying in the wind, it was scary.

"We'll keep moving on for now." The three went back down the road, but the old home with the coffins was gone. Instead, there were homes with white lanterns on their doors.

"Now, we're truly trapped." Master Bai's hand went to the jade necklace on his neck. "It's not good for us to keep going around in circles. Why don't we just stay in one of the houses for the night?"

"The houses with white lanterns are mostly occupied by ghosts, but the information was given by the old lady. She might be trying to trick us." Ol' Wei thought back to what had happened that night, and it felt like a dream.

"Shall we go inside to confirm?" Master Bai walked to one of the homes. He raised his hand but did not dare to knock on it. The warning given by the old lady reverberated in his mind— *Don't knock on the door at night.*

Chen Ge did not stop Master Bai. He was concentrating on what to do. He might have appeared rash, but that was because, of the three of them, he knew how dangerous Coffin Village was.

"We cannot stay at the same place anymore; it might attract the ghosts." Chen Ge was trying to come up with a solution when the white cat in his backpack suddenly meowed. It was shrill and mixed with a rare emotion of fear. The last time Chen Ge heard this was at his Haunted House when the door in the toilet was almost open.

"Something is coming!" Chen Ge responded immediately. He grabbed Master Bai and Ol' Wei, and the three of them rushed into the house with the white lantern.

"Chen Ge, what are you doing?"

"Shush, do not say a word!"

Chen Ge closed the wooden door, and in that instant, there were the cries of a baby coming from the street.

"It's a child?"

"Quiet!"

Seeing how intense Chen Ge was, Ol' Wei and Master Bai were also made nervous. They stood where they were, unwilling to move. The crying sound came closer and closer. Even with their hands over their eyes, the blood-curdling cries still echoed in their brain.

Chen Ge's upper body leaned forward; he did not dare to make a move lest he made a sound. He leaned closer to the middle gap in the door and used his Yin Yang Vision to look out at the street.

The lanterns hanging on the doors darkened like they were dyed red. The wind stopped howling, and only the baby's crying remained.

It's coming!

A small arm reached out from the corner. Chen Ge's pupils narrowed as he focused his gaze in that direction. Soon, the monster showed its face. It looked like a drowned baby. He had no hair, and his skin was bloated. His facial features were blurry, and he was swaddled in a red cloth!

A Red Specter? A Red Specter this young?

The baby continued crying. He crawled speedily on the ground like he was looking for something. He crawled until he reached the house that Chen Ge's group was hiding in.

The boy's face turned up, and the wrinkled skin was pulled back to reveal his real face. The baby had no eyes and nose but only three black holes and a weirdly-shaped mouth.

Chen Ge held his breath. He was thankful that he had brought the white cat with him because without its warning, with the monster's speed, he would not have had time to start the recorder before he was assaulted.

Chapter 318: Series of Weird Events

His finger pressed on the play button, and Chen Ge slowly bent his body down. His muscles tensed like a bow ready to fire. The memory of fighting the ghost stories society's Red Specter was still fresh in his mind. That day, he had summoned Xu Yin and the Pen Spirt at the same time, but they could barely stop the Red Specter for ten seconds. This was the second time he was going to face a Red Specter without Zhang Ya. Different from Fang Hwa Apartments, this time, he had brought all of the ghosts inside the Haunted House with him.

Ten against one, it should be fine!

His hair stood on end; Chen Ge was ready for combat. The ghost baby outside looked at the wooden door, and its body slowly turned wrinkled. Pungent red liquid seeped out of his skin, and after it landed to the floor, it circled around him like tadpoles. All the blood seemed to possess its own consciousness. It looked similar to the blood vessels on the monsters possessing the ghost stories society's member. It was filled with resentment and malice.

"The child looks only several months old—he shouldn't remember much about life—so how can he carry such strong resentment?" Chen Ge had not discovered all the details concerning the formation of a Red Specter. He knew what the key points were: they had to be filled with resentment at the time of death, and they were naturally aggressive!

Red Specters were the representation of cruelty and violence. The first reaction when they saw other ghosts was to tear them open and consume them! Both Zhang Ya and Xu Yin showed this quality. Chen Ge did not dare let his guard down when facing the Red Specters.

The light shining from the lanterns dampened, and the street was slowly dyed red. The baby turned his body around, but he did not launch an attack directly. Instead, he crawled slowly toward the door. The blood flowed underneath him like it would rush at the door at any moment.

Chen Ge rehearsed the event in his mind. He would call out Xu Yin first and then jump back to use Yan Danian's power. Even if he could not pull the ghost baby into the comic, at least it would be able to slow him down. Using that chance, he would summon the other ghosts in the comic. With the collective power of all the ghosts, maybe they could ambush the ghost baby. Chen Ge had been avoiding altercations with Red Specters, but that did not mean that he was completely helpless.

The risk is huge, but if I can kill the ghost baby for Xu Yin to consume then he will certainly transform into a new Red Specter!

Thinking about this, Chen Ge made the decision to bet his life on this chance!

His Yin Yang Vision was radiating with coldness. He was completely ready when the ghost baby outside the door stopped. His wrinkled ears moved. A woman's voice was calling his name from somewhere faraway.

The ugly face showed a trace of fear and concern. The pool of blood on the floor returned to his body, and the skin returned to its usual plumpness. The ghost baby then left the scene quickly. When the ghost baby disappeared, Chen Ge loosened his tightly gripped fists, and he sighed.

Hard to tell whether his departure is a good thing or a bad thing.

Chen Ge's expression was complicated. The ghost baby's departure meant that he had avoided a battle that he would have had a hard time winning, but since the woman's voice could scare the baby away, this meant that the village had a Red Specter that was scarier than the ghost baby.

After all, it is a three-star scenario.

Massaging his fingers, Chen Ge straightened himself and returned to Ol' Wei and Master Bai.

"Temporarily, it's fine. The thing has left."

"What happened earlier? What came? Did it stay outside the door for a while?" Ol' Wei rubbed his nose. "Even through the door, we could smell the pungent smell of blood."

"It was a little baby."

"A baby?"

"It's hard to explain," Chen Ge grumbled. "But remember this. If you see anything wearing red clothes in this village, go into hiding immediately. Do not try to fight it; running is probably pointless."

"Red clothes..." Ol' Wei nodded and remembered this warning. "So, where shall we go now?"

"Let's stay here for now." The night deepened, and more and more scary things started to appear inside Coffin Village, so Chen Ge did not dare move about wantonly. "This Coffin Village's Trial Mission only asks me for one thing, but the difficulty is probably higher than the Third Sick Hall."

Staying alive, two simple words, but for Chen Ge, it was a huge challenge.

Ghost baby and the woman who summoned the ghost baby away, Coffin Village has at least two Red Specters, and that woman is probably stronger than a normal Red Specter.

Chen Ge turned to look at his own shadow. Other than Zhang Ya and Xu Yin, the other Specters from his Haunted House only looked scary on the surface.

Thankfully, there was no fight, or the ten might have lost to the one.

Chen Ge patted the white cat on its head. The cat had done a good job, but it still had not recovered from the shock. Its pair of multi-colored eyes looked at Chen Ge with resentment, and the hair on its neck was still standing. "Don't worry, tell me if there's danger. I will not leave you behind."

Chen Ge carried his backpack and stood in the courtyard with the hammer. The old house was huge. The courtyard was filled with weeds, and it had two dead trees. "There are lanterns on the door, so this place probably houses some ghosts. Be careful."

“Chen Ge, wait a minute.” Master Bai used the flashlight to shine at the two trees. “Don’t you think these trees are familiar? Dried branches, exposed roots, and a bulging trunk. Doesn’t it look like the tree that covered the Zhu family’s eldest daughter?”

Chen Ge did feel that way after being reminded by Master Bai. At the time, Zhu Xinrou had been shoved into the hole under the tree headfirst. He pushed the tree, and the roots were already rotten. Chen Ge could see roughly someone was buried under the tree.

“Don’t knock the tree down.” Master Bai stopped Chen Ge. “It is an ancient tradition to bury cursed people in the ground like this after they die. People plant a peach tree above their grave because, according to legend, a peach tree can stop the curse they’re carrying.”

“Meaning it is for protection?” Chen Ge touched the trunk, but something was not right. “Master Bai, these don’t appear to be peach trees.”

The three studied for a long time before they managed to identify the trees as locust trees.

“Locust trees are the most wicked of all the trees; this is the first time I have seen people planting locust trees above someone’s grave.” Master Bai gripped Chen Ge’s arm. “Let’s not create any more trouble. We’ll stay away from them, and perhaps they will leave us alone.”

“That’s hard to say. There are two bodies buried in the courtyard, so this place is definitely haunted. Perhaps we’ve already been targeted.”

Chapter 319: Secret of Coffin Village

“Why are you so intent on jinxing us?” Master Bai still minded these things, but Chen Ge was the complete opposite.

“It’ll be fine. Just follow behind me.” He walked through the courtyard with the hammer and entered the main room.

The layout of the old house was very interesting. There were bedrooms on each side of the main room, but there were no beds. Instead, each bedroom had a coffin in it.

“Have you noticed something peculiar about these houses?” Chen Ge leaned against the hammer and scanned his surroundings.

“You mean the coffins inside the house?” Master Bai pushed the door open through his clothes; he did not want to touch anything there.

Chen Ge shook his head. “Not that.

“The houses don’t seem to have an oven or a fire starter.”

Ol’ Wei looked at Master Bai. If Chen Ge had not brought that up, they would not have noticed this problem.

“The fire starter is the place where people light a fire and cook meals. Without that, how are they supposed to eat?” Chen Ge sat on the chair, and his tone slowed down, “Or do the villagers not need to

eat? Is this a dead person's home? If that is true, then it would make sense to have coffins instead of beds."

His voice was calm, but it sent chills up his two listeners' spines.

"The white lanterns, white paper on the door, coffin in the room, could this whole village be a Ghost Village?"

Chen Ge thought back to the information he found when he was building the Minghun scenario.

"There was a story about a massacre that happened to a village deep in the mountains during the war period. Several years later, people got lost inside the mountain, and they accidentally wandered inside the village. Then they saw every family was having a funeral, and the villagers looked weird. The outsiders didn't dare ask any question and escaped the village in the middle of the night. When they returned to the village in the morning, the place had been abandoned for a long time already, and there was no sign of people living there."

"You mean, we're now inside a Ghost Village?" Ol' Wei asked uncertainly.

"Coffin Village is scarier than that. I feel this place has a bigger secret that we haven't uncovered yet." Chen Ge placed the hammer on his feet and cupped his chin in his palm. "The people in this village are much more complicated than we think. There are original villagers that turned into ghosts, escaped villagers who were captured, and then us outsiders. The old lady's soul had no need to lie to us about the outsiders. Other than us, other people are also trapped inside this village. No matter who they were, I think we should meet up with them."

"But how do we do that? We can't even find a way out ourselves."

"I think we need to be more careful of our surroundings then." Chen Ge then turned to look outside. He accidentally saw half a human face lying on the wall.

"Someone's there!" He jumped up immediately. The sudden warning alerted Ol' Wei and Master Bai.

"What did you see?"

"There was a human face on the wall. I saw it once inside the previous home. At the time, it flashed past temporarily, and then I saw a set of graveclothes walking out the door; it was following us." Chen Ge told the situation to Ol' Wei and Master Bai.

"He's just next door; shall we go take a look?" Ol' Wei was just suggesting that; he did not want to wander off.

"If the person wants to run, we won't be able to catch it." Chen Ge looked at the wall. "I have a feeling it has a reason for following us, and it didn't seem like it's going to harm us."

He just finished when the front door slowly opened and bright red graveclothes stood in the middle of the door.

"Don't fret. This is the thing that has been following us."

In the middle of the night, the door was pushed open, and the graveclothes stood alone. Anyone would have been scared looking at this.

“Are you a person or a ghost?” Chen Ge stood inside the room and hid the hammer behind him. The person seemed to struggle for a long time before coming to a decision. The graveclothes were opened from the middle, and they were hiding a thin, short man. His lips fell open, and after a long time, he said, “I’m here to help you.”

“Help us? Wonderful, why don’t you come in first?” Chen Ge smiled kindly. He gripped the hammer; he wanted to trick the man to come into the room first. The man shook his head. He had been following Chen Ge, so he knew Chen Ge’s tricks.

“I’ll just stay out here.” The man removed the graveclothes, and when his body completely removed itself from the graveclothes, Chen Ge saw that the man had one large arm and one small arm.

“I’ve seen you when you entered the village, but before I could accost any of you, you were tricked away by the ghosts. I was worried, so I trailed behind you while wearing the ghost’s graveclothes. I wanted to find the chance to save you.”

The man sounded sincere, but Chen Ge did not believe that the man would put himself in such danger for a stranger. “You followed us just so you can save us?”

“Saving you is saving me. You might not believe me, but if we are unable to leave this village tonight, we’re all going to die.” The man lowered his voice, and fear and anxiety were apparent in his tone. “The door will open tonight, and the thing will come out from behind the door again.”

“The door will open tonight?” Chen Ge frowned. “You’re one of the original villagers here, right? Can you tell us what happened to Coffin Village? Why did it turn into its current situation?”

“Coffin Village? I guess the name fits.” The man closed the door and walked to the middle of the courtyard. It was hard to tell how old he was from his looks. “No one can remember this village’s original name. The reason it has become like this has plenty to do with a woman.

“Our village is hidden deep inside the forest, and this isolates us from the rest of the world. It was very difficult for a man to find an unrelated wife, so we settled with close marriage. However, that led to many abnormalities.

“The elder at the time worried that we would die out eventually, so after a discussion with the villagers, they decided to ‘kidnap wives’ from the outside. The first few times were perfectly fine. If the new wife refused to listen, they would be locked up, starved, and beaten. Eventually, they would learn.

“However, the last time, they caught the young lady of a scholar’s family. She was stubborn and refused to submit. She escaped several times, and she was almost beaten to death every time. It was not until she was pregnant that she stopped running away. The villagers thought that was the end of her resistance.

“But just as the girl’s new family was preparing to celebrate the happy occasion, she jumped into the well.”

Chapter 320: Sacrifice!

“One body, two deaths. All the villagers said that the woman was unlucky, so they found a few young fellas to come crack open the well to haul the body up. However, weird things happened then. The woman’s head was facing downward when she jumped, but half way through the digging, people saw the woman’s face turning upward.

“The dead person’s face was soaked until it was white. Her eyes were bulging, staring at the people outside the well. With guilt suffocating their hearts, the young men were all spooked, and none had the courage to continue digging.

“But they couldn’t just leave the body inside the well. The elder discussed this with the girl’s new family, and they would provide the money to hire outsiders to dig the well. However, when they returned to the well the next day, the body, which had been facing upward, changed to legs facing upwards. It looked like she was trying to swim deeper into the well.

“Those who saw this reported it to the elder. To prevent panic, the elder said the earlier digging must have affected the water flow and the body slipped down on its own. No one bought this excuse, and on the third day, the villagers discovered that the body inside the well had disappeared!

“There are in total four wells around the village. They were built on top of the same underground river. Since the body had disappeared, they thought it might float up in any one of them. Then weird things continued to happen. The well that the woman died in was the west well, so to avoid her, many people went to the east well.

“The water looked normal, but when they used it to cook rice, they would discover woman’s long hair in the rice. One week later, those who lived near the well heard the sound of water splashing in the middle of the night like something was climbing up the wall of the well.

“The villager looked out the window and saw a red shadow climbing out the well!

“The following day, the villagers discovered the woman’s husband dead in his own bedroom. The woman’s husband was one with a deformity; he had a problem on his face and his arms. When he died, his head was shoved inside a water barrel, cause of death was drowning. This sent a wave of panic through the village. The elder called everyone and suggested calling a doctor from outside to take a look, but before the doctor arrived, the livestock in the village started to die by massive numbers.

“Some who were afraid uprooted and left. However, the scariest thing was, every night, those deserters would be found deposited at the valley in front of the village with various causes of death.

“It appeared like whoever drank the well water would be dragged back and killed. The villagers didn’t have time to build coffins and have funerals because there were too many dead people, so they just left them half-buried.

“Escaping the village meant certain death, and staying behind wasn’t going to save us either. The villagers tried many things, but they couldn’t do anything to the female ghost. Her resentment was too deep, and every night, one or two families would be found dead.

“The number of deaths soared. The people here were superstitious, and we believed if the dead weren’t buried inside coffin, they would return as a hungry ghost. No one knew who would die next, but death

was coming. Therefore, every family started to make their own coffins, and this was why each family had coffins instead of beds.

“One month later, the woman finally stopped, but by then, there was no normal looking person left in the village. She had killed every normal person and sinner in the village.

“Then, people understood what she was trying to do. It was because the villagers were afraid of the effects of consanguineous marriages on the future generations that they started kidnapping outside women. Thus, the female ghost would kill all the normal villagers and leave behind the abnormal monsters inside the village. Her message was—let the villagers only show themselves as monsters!”

The more the man got through his story, the more agitated he became. He waved his arms of different lengths. “The ancestry’s lineage has been corrupted, and only monsters remain in the village. Those who were born normal were killed, and only deformed creatures please the woman and might escape her wicked claws.”

The man’s story was rather heavy. Chen Ge did not say anything; it was Ol’ Wei who spoke first. “My identity aside, there’s no one I hate more than human kidnappers.”

“That happened many years ago, and the people have been punished and killed. Now, only the innocent are being affected.” The man waved his arm. “No one wishes to be a monster. When I saw my reflection in the water, I wanted to die, but I’m not satisfied!”

He clenched his fists, and it looked funny, but no one was laughing.

“If this was one year ago, I wouldn’t have thought to resist, but things are different.” There was an indescribable expression on his despair-filled face. “I have my own child, a little boy with no deformities.”

“You have your own child?”

“Yes, it is miracle. Two monsters with their own child.” The man sighed. “I cannot leave him here; he’ll be targeted by the woman. Even if the woman doesn’t discover my child, the other monsters in the village will sacrifice him to her to save their own lives.”

Chen Ge heard the anomaly in the man’s words. “The other villagers will sacrifice your child?”

“The people here have gone insane. No, they can’t even be known as people anymore.” The man’s nails scratched his skin. “Many years ago, when the ghost massacred the village, only one family escaped her vengeance. The family had a single daughter. The family was the Zhu family.

“It was this Zhu woman who aided her first escape. After the woman got caught, even the Zhu daughter suffered the same fate and got tied up and beaten. Then, when the woman got bullied, it was often this Zhu woman who came to her aid. That was probably why Zhu family was spared.

“As the number of villagers dwindled, the remaining villagers asked the Zhu woman to become the new elder to protect themselves. They wanted her to communicate with the female ghost. The villagers thought she would help them beg for mercy, but reality was different. The Zhu woman sided with the ghost, and she became the tool for the ghost to manage the village.

“To enjoy better torment, the ghost demanded that whenever we spot a normal newborn, we have to carry it to the Zhu woman. If someone dares to hide that secret, they will be tortured and killed!

“No one knows what happens to the babies after they are brought to the Zhu family. We only know that after the Zhu woman carries the babies into her darkened home, they never return.”

His eyes were filled with fear and uncertainty. The man clasped his abnormal hands together. “This rule persists until today. My boy’s situation has been exposed to the villagers, so I can only choose to collaborate with you outsiders. Please take my son out of this place before it is too late!”