

Horrors 371

Chapter 371: Han Bao'er

This was the first time Chen Ge had met a woman with such unnatural beauty. Her figure and appearance were flawless, and that was the scariest thing. Chen Ge was reminded of Han Bao'er's patient file—this Patient No. 6 suffered from Body Dysmorphic Disorder. She tended to exaggerate the flaws of her body and would never be satisfied, thus taking drastic measures to fix them.

According to the record, this perfect woman before him had once tried to chop off her finger because the nails on both hands were not symmetrical. She had the most perfect appearance, but her heart was twisted beyond recognition. Instead of saying that she was a beautiful woman, it was more accurate to describe her as a monster who had the most beautiful human skin.

Since her appearance, the atmosphere in the room changed, and all the lights were switched off. In the dark, malnourished children climbed out from behind her, and they were all connected to her through faded red lines.

"These are your ghosts?" Chen Ge took a step back. He scanned the room, and after realizing there was no Red Specter, his heart relaxed. "There are so many of them. It must have been hard trying to rear so many young ghosts."

"They were once my children, and only I can make them listen to me." This sentence from Han Bao'er seemed to mean a lot to her. Her eyes that looked at the ghost kids on the floor and on Lee Zheng were filled with pain.

"Children?" Chen Ge looked at these ghosts, and a few of them looked rather similar to Han Bao'er. He seemed to understand something, and a wave of disgust washed over him. "Looks like you're quite sick."

"Of course. If I wasn't sick, why would I stay with these dirty things, and why would I talk to you guys that are filled with that disgusting stench?" Han Bao'er used her nail to claw at her arm to form even-looking wounds. Blood dripped out, and it looked beautiful in all the wrong ways. "I hate dirty things, but the world itself is dirty. The only solution I have is to use these dirty things to ruin this dirty world."

The blood fell, and the red lines between her and the ghosts became more obvious.

"I have no idea what you've been through, so I have no right to critique your decision. Perhaps you have your own reasons for doing these things, but that doesn't mean you're correct." Chen Ge pressed the play button on the recorder and grabbed the handle of the hammer. "The members of this ghost stories society are all insane. You chose to treat yourself to alleviate the pain in your heart, but the choice of method is wrong."

"Treatment method?" Han Bao'er moved the red lines in her grasp.

"Life has been unfair to you, but it's time to let go."

"You sure sound calm, but I'm sure you must be very afraid. You're only pretending to be calm, waiting for the police to come save you, right?" Han Bao'er thought she had seen through Chen Ge's ploy, so she did not waste time discussing this with Chen Ge. She ordered her ghosts to rush at him. At the same

time, Qiu Meng picked up the fruit knife on the coffee table, but he knew not to get close to Han Bao'er. Like a slave, he moved to the other side of the room.

"Other than the ghost on the police officer's shoulder, you can do whatever you want to the others." Chen Ge leaned against the wall. He had nowhere to run, but he did not look afraid. He talked to the air like he was mad.

The ghost children crawled on the ground. There were many of them, and they moved fast. When they had almost surrounded Chen Ge, a blood red shadow appeared and slammed the children into wisps of smoke with one stomp. Xu Yin appeared with his arms lowered. His wounds were dripping with blood, dying his shirt red.

"A Red Specter? Isn't your Red Specter hibernating?" The lines between Han Bao'er and the children started to tremble. Her children were afraid. That fear channeled into her body, and she blurted that out without thinking.

"Looks like you recognized me a long time ago." Chen Ge was quite surprised. After all, this was his first time meeting Han Bao'er. Then again, there were only two people left in the society, so the chairperson would definitely inform Han Bao'er of Chen Ge.

"You've had two Red Specters with you all this time?" The blood lines that Han Bao'er controlled shook even harder, like the ghost children were trying to escape.

"Yes, I never did say I only have one Red Specter." Chen Ge let Xu Yin deal with Han Bao'er while he took out the hammer from his backpack. "This small space is quite limiting to such a big hammer. Oh well, so be it."

Chen Ge did not dare let his guard down while facing a fitness trainer that was much larger than he was. Flipping through the comic, he summoned the English Teacher, the real estate agent, and the gambler.

The battle shifted in a second. Qiu Ming gripped the fruit knife the size of a palm, and he asked in a shaking voice, "Who are you?"

"I'm just the boss of a Haunted House." Chen Ge glanced at the corridor. "We have no time to waste. We need to settle this before the police arrive."

Chen Ge and the three ghosts attacked at once. It did not take long for the man to scream for mercy and the sound of bone snapping. There were sounds of other doors opening; it sounded like concerned neighbors. Chen Ge ran to the door, and with Qiu Meng watching on with despair, Chen Ge locked the door. "Now, no one is coming to save you before the police arrive."

Chen Ge used Yan Danian's power to drag the phone spirit into the comic and allowed Xu Yin to do whatever he wanted. Xu Yin no longer needed to feed on normal ghosts. He followed Chen Ge's order and massacred the group of ghost children. The ghost children were connected to Han Bao'er, so whenever one died, a baby handprint would appear on her body.

Even through the distance, Chen Ge could feel the heavy resentment in those handprints. The person Han Bao'er's children hated the most in the world was her.

"They are your children, so you shouldn't have weighed them down with your own misfortune."

Chen Ge looked at Han Bao'er and realized that beauty was indeed a sin at times. In this world, there were many places where sunlight could not reach and places where selfishness and ugliness fester. Chen Ge did not know why Han Bao'er snapped mentally, but he knew that every mental patient had their own sorry and painful past. It was also due to that past that they used even crazier and crueler methods to seek salvation.

The baby handprints on Han Bao'er's body increased; the dead ghost babies seemed to want to drag their mother down into hell with them. The blood lines snapped one by one. When the last ghost child was vanquished by Xu Yin, Han Bao'er finally collapsed. Tiny baby handprints surfaced on her flawless face.

Chapter 372: If Beauty Is a Sin

Han Bao'er suffered from Body Dysmorphic Disorder and would not allow any flaw to appear on her body. When the baby handprints surfaced on her skin, she scratched at them wildly and screamed in throes of madness, trying her best to yank the handprints from her skin. Unfortunately, even after she fainted, the handprints still stuck to her body like birthmarks.

The blood slid down her perfect skin onto the floor. The wounded Han Bao'er lay in the middle of the room with scratches all over her body. When Han Bao'er lost consciousness, so did Lee Zheng, who was controlled earlier. At the same time, the black phone vibrated, but Chen Ge did not have time to look. He needed to deal with the other culprit before the police arrived.

Qiu Meng, who had both of his arms broken, was like a lamb waiting to be slaughtered. He was stronger than Chen Ge, but he did not have practical survival knowledge like Chen Ge did.

"What else do you have to say?" Chen Ge looked at Qiu Meng, and he felt a headache. If only Zhang Ya was there, then she could turn the man's soul into a doll, and that would not expose Chen Ge. The war had been won. The incapacitated Qiu Meng looked at the collapsed Han Bao'er, and the emotions in his eyes were complicated.

"She was ultimately the victim. If you knew what she has been through, you'd understand the meaning behind her every word."

"Then, tell me, what has she been through?" Chen Ge was still curious about this person known as Han Bao'er.

"She lived with her mother when she was young. She was just like those kids crawling on the ground, attached to that venomous woman. She was a living person, but to her mother, she was nothing more than merchandise. Beauty became a sin; it brought indescribable despair. It was the world that was wrong, and she just wanted to fight back when she was cornered."

The sound of footsteps entered the room from the outside corridor; the police were coming. Chen Ge did not have time to waste. He tried to communicate with Xu Yin to ask whether there was a way to knock Qiu Meng out and erase his memory of the night without taking his life. Xu Yin misunderstood Chen Ge. He had his hands on Qiu Meng's head, and the wounds on his arms opened. Red blood soaked into Qiu Meng's body.

The man's eyes were dyed red. Just as Chen Ge thought Qiu Meng's eyes were about to explode, the color disappeared from his eyes, and he fainted. Xu Yin seemed to have stolen something from Qiu Meng's mind, and the heart that he was missing recovered a slight hue of red.

The key to becoming a Red Specter is related to living humans? What is it that Xu Yin's heart is missing?

The door was knocked down, and Chen Ge knew that the police had arrived. He recalled all the ghosts. Then, he chose the most comfortable spot to 'faint' on and started to figure out how to deal with the upcoming interrogation.

"Quick, we have injured personnel! Call the ambulance!" Police officers' voices echoed in his ears. When Chen Ge felt his body move, he peeled his eyes open slightly and realized that Team 1's officers had all arrived. He felt weirdly comforted.

Han Bao'er and Qiu Meng had fainted, and it was unknown when Lee Zheng would wake up. To avoid unnecessary trouble, Chen Ge chose to act unconscious. The lack of rest for the past few days caused Chen Ge to fall asleep inside the ambulance that ferried him to the hospital.

At the hospital, the doctor inspected Chen Ge and Lee Zheng's bodies. They were both fine, but Han Bao'er and Qiu Meng were sent to the ICU. Lying in bed, Chen Ge still remembered to silently set an alarm for himself before he fell back to sleep.

At 7 am, the alarm rang, and Chen Ge stretched lazily. He had not had such a good sleep in a long time. He pulled the sheet back and looked around. Lee Zheng had already left, so he was alone in the room.

Lee Zheng was hypnotized by Hao Bao'er last night, so he shouldn't remember what happened after then. Chen Ge stood up and inspected the backpack that was left on the bedside table. The recorder and comic were in there, but the hammer had disappeared. He put on his clothes hurriedly and ran out of the room.

"You're awake?" Standing guard at the door was Ol' Wei, who had accompanied him to Coffin Village. "The killer's identity has been confirmed, and Lee Zheng has given you all the credit. You'll probably appear on television again in a few days."

"Given me all the credit?" Chen Ge smiled. "Then I have to ask, is there a reward to solving this case?"

"At the very least, you're a business owner, but all you can think of is the money. Can honor be measured by money?" Ol' Wei felt Chen Ge's way of thinking was a problem. "Come with me. Captain Yan is waiting for us downstairs in the ICU. He has some questions for you."

Chen Ge followed Ol' Wei down the stairs, and from a far, they saw a room that had officers standing at the door. After getting their permission, Ol' Wei told Chen Ge to enter the room. The atmosphere was not right, but Chen Ge did not think anything would happen to him in broad daylight.

He pushed the door opened, and there was only one bed in the room. Qiu Meng was lying in bed with a respirator. The doctor explained the situation to Captain Yan. They had tried their best, but they could not resuscitate Qiu Meng. When Captain Yan saw Chen Ge, he had the doctor leave the room before closing the door.

"Captain Yan, Ol' Wei said you're looking for me?" Chen Ge glanced Qiu Meng on the bed. His head, both arms and a leg were wrapped in bandages. The man looked pitiable.

"This is yours, right?" Captain Yan dragged out a scary-looking hammer from the nearby cupboard. It had a police seal on it.

"It might look scary, but it's just a small prop I use at my Haunted House."

"A small prop?" Captain Yan needed to use both hands to steady the hammer. "We have checked the wounds on Qiu Meng's body. He suffered from torn muscles and shattered bones. Without immediate medical attention, he would be lying in bed for the rest of his life."

"He attacked me first—you can ask Lee Zheng that—I was just trying to defend myself." The way Chen Ge did not seem to be sorry about anything made Captain Yan feel helpless.

"I know that, but sometimes I hope you'd try something more rational like calling me when you have a clue and waiting for back-up." Captain Yan pulled the seal from the hammer. "Now both the killer and the accomplice are unconscious. We cannot get any testimony, so people with malicious intent can turn this around on you."

He returned the hammer to Chen Ge and whispered, "Hide this inside your bag, and make sure it's not discovered when you leave. I don't care where you get this thing, but it's a banned item, so try not to bring it with you in the future."

"Understood."

"Go talk to Ol' Wei and Lee Zheng. They still need your complete statement."

After leaving the sick room, Chen Ge mulled over every word Captain Yan said, and he could not connect Captain Yan to the chairperson of the society.

Perhaps I'm mistaken.

Chapter 373: Third Special Visitor

Chen Ge reached into the side compartment of the bag. There was a sealed bag wrapped up in oil paper. *Good, it hasn't been touched.*

The bag contained the bloodied nail used by the rag doll the night before. Replacing the bag, Chen Ge was led by Ol' Wei to write his statement before he left.

He rushed back to New Century Park and prepared for a new day of work. Opening the gate, Chen Ge helped Xu Wan and Xiao Gu with their make-up and had Uncle Xu sell the tickets. There were workers assigned by Director Luo to help maintain order. Chen Ge wandered around the Haunted House and realized that he had nothing else to do.

Xiao Gu was getting into the groove, and Xu Wan herself was an experienced employee. With Chen Ge's guidance, the twenty-four mannequins became better at their job. They knew the rules of the Haunted

House, and when they accidentally caused the visitors to faint, afraid that Chen Ge might get mad, they would try to resuscitate the visitors.

In any case, things were slowly moving upward, and now all Chen Ge needed to do was manage the general environment. Sitting where the visitors were required to sign the disclaimer, Chen Ge took out the black phone.

After Han Bao'er fainted, the black phone had vibrated like a new message had been accepted. Chen Ge had not been able to read through the message at the time, so he waited until now.

"The completion rate for Third Sick Hall is over ninety percent! Congratulations, Specter's Favored, for acquiring the hidden item for this Trial Mission—Third Sick Hall's Patient List!

"Third Sick Hall's Patient List (100 Malice Point): I don't understand why I became like this; all I ever did was try to be human."

Looking at the message, Chen Ge was slightly disappointed. He had thought that the hidden item for the Third Sick Hall would be Men Nan's main persona, but it seemed that he had overestimated everything. Pocketing the black phone, Chen Ge went to the prop room and found several yellowed patient records inside the wooden box.

The curious thing was that only five of them had a black and white photo. Wang Shenglong, Men Nan's mother, Wu Fei, the Devil, and Xiong Qing did not come with the photo. *Only those who are confirmed dead will have photo attached?*

Wang Shenglong was still alive, Men Nan's mother was guarding Men Nan's second persona, Wu Fei had been taken away by the well ghost at Coffin Village, the Devil had been made into a doll by Zhang Ya, and Xiong Qing had turned into a Red Specter with the society's help. Other than these five, the rest of the patients had their own black and white photos.

Chen Ge examined the photos and realized that each photo seemed to be trapping a twisted soul. Some of them were crying, others were laughing, some stared at Chen Ge silently, and others contained the desire to destroy the world.

The lingering spirit of the dead patients concentrated on their patient's list?

The memory of their life made it so that their spirit would not have the release of eternal sleep. When they were alive, they were the best hosts for monsters behind the door, but after they died, they became special Specters with unlimited potential.

Chen Ge touched the patient list, and a chill radiated from the pictures. *The hidden item for Third Sick Hall should be the souls of these ten patients.*

Chen Ge did not know whether that was a good reward or not. These ten spirits had great potential; with their help, Chen Ge could even rebuild the ghost stories society. However, there were two sides to everything. All ten of these patients were completely mad, and every one of them was extremely dangerous, so making them submit would be very difficult.

The most dangerous presence at the Third Sick Hall is actually these ten patients. Now that all ten of their spirits have returned to me, in a bit, I should be able to complete a fully-operating three-star scenario!

There was a hidden mission attached to the Third Sick Hall—demolishing the ghost stories society. After completing that mission, Chen Ge would see the real terror of a three-star scenario for himself.

The complete Third Sick Hall should include the ten crazed patients, the mad doctors, or something even scarier.

Leaving the visitors in the hands of these ten patients, just thinking about it made Chen Ge scared.

When I did the Trial Mission, I only ran into a few of them. If I return all the patients, the visitors might really need mental treatment after this.

Putting the patients' list away, Chen Ge had a new understanding of a three-star scenario.

Temporarily, three-star scenarios are enough to hold the interest of the visitors. Before Zhang Ya awakens, there's no need to rush to unlock that four-star scenario.

After exiting the prop room, Chen Ge sent more batches of visitors into the Haunted House. Hearing their screams and the way they shook as they exited the Haunted House, Chen Ge felt satisfied. The visitors swore to not come again, but they also were curious enough to ask others what the other scenarios were like. Whenever this happened, Chen Ge would wander over to introduce the selling points of the other scenarios, telling them since they had already paid the park's ticket price, why not try everything? Life should not have any regrets.

Some would buy what Chen Ge had to say and start to line up again. Of course, there were visitors who were so spooked that they started to run when they saw Chen Ge coming toward them.

The sound of 'joy' reverberated above the Haunted House, giving new life to New Century Park. Lunchtime came, but the number of visitors had not decreased. Xu Yan and Xiao Gu went for their lunch break while Chen Ge joined Uncle Xu to sell tickets.

"Uncle Xu, what happened to the few people who were sent to the hospital a few days ago?" Chen Ge worried about this because he was afraid it might affect the park.

"Director Luo has helped you cover it. Just stop creating trouble in the future. It's a key time for theme park, and we cannot afford to tumble over these small mistakes."

"Understood." Chen Ge wanted to say something more when the black phone in his pocket vibrated. He walked to somewhere with the sun and switched on the screen.

"The effect of Midnight Ticket Counter has been triggered! The third special visitor has appeared! Please make use of this opportunity; the results will be different based on your choices!"

A special visitor at a time like this? Chen Ge looked down the long line, and he frowned. *This is one of the bad things about having too many customers—how am I supposed to identify the special visitor?*

He aimed his phone at the visitors lining up. This way even if he failed to find said visitor today, he could slowly examine the lines to see which visitor was acting strange.

“What are you doing taking pictures? Quickly lead the visitors into the Haunted House,” Uncle Xu urged. When Chen Ge was taking picture, a group of five young people bought tickets.

“Follow me.” Chen Ge led the way. The five seemed to know him because they kept whispering among themselves behind his back.

Chapter 374: The Girl Who Doesn’t Know Fear

Chen Ge’s Haunted House had become quite famous in Jiujiang, and a bunch of videos about it could be found online. In fact, some of the visitors had photoshopped Chen Ge holding the hammer as an emoji, so from how he saw it, it was quite normal for him to be recognized. “Which scenario are you guys going to challenge?”

“We’ve cleared all the one-star scenarios, so we plan to challenge Mu Yang High School today.” It was a girl who spoke. She looked normal but very tall. She had a nasally voice, and based on the lines on her palm, she seemed to be a basketball player.

“Two-star scenarios are much scarier than one-star scenarios. I hope you’re prepared.” Chen Ge waved at them. “Come this way, please sign the disclaimer first.”

Chen Ge handed the forms to the group. He stood to the side, thinking they were normal visitors. However, when he saw the name of one of the girls, he realized that he was wrong.

Liu Xianxian? Isn’t that Gao Ru Xue’s roommate? Chen Ge looked at the other disclaimers and saw the name written by the tall girl—Ma Yin. The chance of having two names repeated was rare. What were they doing at the Haunted House?

Chen Ge had just received the hint from the black phone when Liu Xianxian and Ma Yin entered the Haunted House, so Chen Ge paid full attention. He sidled to the group of young people and asked casually, “Are you students from Jiujiang’s Medical University?”

Once he said that, all five of them raised their heads. They looked nervous like they had been targeted by a bad person.

“How did you know that?” Liu Xianxian was closest to Chen Ge. She wore a faded perfume.

“I not only know you’re students from Jiujiang’s Medical University, I know you are facing some inner problems, so you come to the Haunted House to release stress,” Chen Ge said randomly, but it sounded quite reasonable to the group of youngsters. “Three guys and two girls coming to visit together, but the two girls stick close together, not glancing once at the guys. I believe your hearts are already taken and are troubled over this thing in your heart.”

Chen Ge’s word hit Liu Xianxian’s heart. Her lips fell open with surprise. “The online comments say you’re proficient at psychology. I didn’t believe it at first, but it looks like I was wrong.”

When Liu Xianxian agreed to Chen Ge’s hypothesis, the three boys looked rather disappointed. Probably due to curiosity, Liu Xianxian asked Chen Ge, “Boss, do you think I should be together with that man or not?”

Chen Ge hesitated and remembered the information that was revealed when he conversed with the phone spirit. After some time, he shook his head and said, "I can only guess what you're thinking from your emotions and actions; I've not met the man you like before, so I cannot give you an answer. But if you believe me, why don't you bring me to go meet that person? I definitely will give you a satisfactory reply."

"Really?" Liu Xianxian was desperate to know whether the man really liked her or not, so she was considering Chen Ge's offer.

"Liu Xian, the boss is just joking with you. Do you really believe him?" Ma Yin put her hand on Liu Xianxian's shoulder—the two seemed close.

"I'm not kidding. Jiujiang's Medical University's students are my local customers, and that's why I'm trying to help. Do you see me offering to help other visitors?" Chen Ge felt like, between Liu Xianxian and Ma Yin, one of them was possibly the special visitor, and that was why he said those things.

Seeing the wavering conviction in her roommate, Ma Yin sighed. "Well, as long as you're happy."

"There's nothing to lose from trying it out." Liu Xianxian exchanged phone numbers with Chen Ge. "Boss, my friend is a straight shooter—that's how she is. Don't mind her."

Chen Ge pocketed his phone and glanced at Ma Yin. "Straight shooter? From how I see it, the trouble in your roommate's heart might not be smaller than yours."

"Do you really think you're a psychologist? What kind of trouble am I facing?" Ma Yin rolled her eyes and took her arm back from Liu Xianxian's shoulders.

Chen Ge looked into Ma Yin's eyes, and after five seconds, he told her, "Big sister?"

It was quiet inside the Haunted House, so even though Chen Ge was not loud, everyone present could hear what he said. Ma Yin, who had remained calm until then, widened her eyes after she heard those two words. Her heart skipped a beat, and her body froze.

"Ma Yin!" Liu Xianxian shook Ma Yin's shoulders. Several breaths later, Ma Yin seemed to wake up from her dream, and she shook Liu Xianxian's arm away. "What's wrong with you? Ma Yin!"

Suddenly realizing something, Ma Yin calmed down immediately. She ignored Chen Ge and pushed the disclaimer on the table forward. "It's nothing. I was indeed thinking about my big sister earlier. I was just surprised boss managed the guess, gave me quite a shock."

"Then, shall we leave? You look so pale."

"You're making too big a deal out of this." Ma Yin smiled apologetically at Chen Ge. "We've signed the disclaimer. Let's begin the experience."

"I just made some random guess, don't think too much of it." Chen Ge picked up the disclaimers and led the way forward. "Mu Yang High School is underground, come with me."

Pulling up the wooden board, Chen Ge watched the batch of visitors enter the scenario. "Have fun."

Closing the boards, the smile on Chen Ge's face slowly disappeared. "Ma Yin's reaction was too weird when she heard the words big sister. Could she be my third special visitor?"

Liu Xianxian was a possible candidate as well, but in comparison, Ma Yin gave Chen Ge a stranger feeling. Entering the surveillance room, Chen Ge followed the students' progress in Mu Yang High School, focusing on Ma Yin and Liu Xianxian. The five were quite brave, and they knew the layout well—they had probably read the guide before they arrived.

As they went down the corridor, the five soon arrived at the sealed classroom. When they passed by, the mannequins in the room turned in unison. The three boys and Ma Yin were spooked, but Liu Xianxian was laughing. "Why is she laughing? Is this funny?"

Inside the creepy environment, being stared at by a group of mannequins, a normal person should have felt scared. Chen Ge had his hand under his chin. Initially, he thought Ma Yin was the special visitor, but seeing how Liu Xianxian acted inside the Haunted House, his opinion changed.

"Is it because it's not scary enough?"

Chen Ge opened the list of background music and entered Black Friday and Wedding Dress into the playlist.

The five stopped outside the sealed classroom. None of the boys dared go in. In the end, Liu Xianxian told them something, and all five of them entered the classroom together.

Chapter 375: The Missing Wife

Cutting to the camera inside the classroom, Chen Ge made a discovery. Liu Xianxian was not without fear, but the way she showed it was different from normal. When she walked past two mannequins, one of the heads fell off. The other four were scared, but Liu Xianxian, who was closest to the human head, maintained her composure. With a smile on her face, she bent down to pick up the mannequin head and put it back. Chen Ge paused the video and studied the smile on Liu Xianxian's face when she picked up the mannequin head.

Her smile looks forced. Whenever she smiles, the angle of her smile looks as if it has been trained. When a person is scared, isn't it normal to show a scared expression? Why did she train herself to smile?

Overcoming fear and facing fear with a smile were two different concepts. What Liu Xianxian was doing confused Chen Ge as well.

The body is shaking, but the face is smiling. Is the girl suffering from some kind of psychological issue?

Chen Ge thought back to the first two special visitors that the Haunted House had welcomed—Fan Yu and Men Nan. When they first arrived, they had also shown weird reactions.

The video continued to play. The five had already exited the sealed classroom. They had been walking for some time when a few mannequins tumbled out of the sealed classroom like they were blown by the window. There was nothing interesting to see after that. Chen Ge paid special attention to Liu Xianxian, and the more he studied her, the more he felt she was acting abnormally.

For example, when they were at the male dormitory in Western Jiujiang's Private Academy, the hanging mannequin suddenly jumped out from the bedroom and chased after the group. The other four screamed for help and ran at their top speed, but Liu Xianxian stood where she was with her body shaking. The smile stayed on her face, but tears were in her eyes. It was clear that she was afraid. Her chest rose unevenly, and it looked like she would faint at any moment.

Of course, the hanging man would not really hurt her. It jumped to stand before her before falling into her chest. The dead man's face looked up at her. Finally, Liu Xianxian lost her composure, and she screamed a series of apologies. However, Chen Ge had no clue who she was apologizing to.

Chen Ge did not dare stay inside the surveillance room any longer. His Haunted House had just sent five visitors to the hospital yesterday. If another visitor fainted on his watch, it would be hard to explain. Pulling the wooden boards back, Chen Ge ran into the scenario. When he arrived, the other four students had already dragged Liu Xianxian out. They screamed at the camera for help, choosing to give up the tour.

"Don't be afraid. I've been following you on the camera. If there's an accident, I'll come to save you." Chen Ge was friendly. He arrived less than a minute after the accident.

"Boss, will anything happen to Liu Xianxian?" Ma Yin was worried.

"Hard to say for now." Chen Ge looked at Liu Xianxian, who was calming down. Her facial muscles twitched. Even at a time like this, she did not forget to smile. "Actually, I'm curious; why didn't she run when she saw something scary but stood there dumbly?"

"I don't really know. She has acted similarly at the dormitory, but it was nothing serious." Ma Yin held Liu Xianxian as they moved to the exit.

"Something similar happened before?"

"Yes, Liu Xian was very afraid of bugs, but one day, that fear disappeared. I even saw her use her bare hands to catch those bugs before."

"It just happened miraculously one fine day?" Chen Ge was now certain that something must have happened to Liu Xianxian at school. However, he understood not to push it. "We have a professional doctor here at the park. Let's bring her to him."

Chen Ge personally led Liu Xianxian to the medical room. He wanted to take this chance to communicate with Liu Xianxian, to find out some information, but he was needed at the Haunted House, so he could not leave. He waited until 6 pm, but there was no message on the black phone, and Chen Ge started to suspect that he had got the wrong person. *Neither of them was the special visitor?*

He busied himself until 6:30 pm. Chen Ge closed the door and cleaned the toilet before he exited the park. He hopped into the taxi and sent Inspector Lee a message, telling him that he had something important to tell him and that it had to be done in secret.

Inspector Lee's reply came very fast, and he asked to meet Chen Ge at the Purple Briars Park next to Western Jiujiang's police station. At 7:10 pm, Chen Ge found Inspector Lee at one of the alcoves.

“Chen Ge, why are you acting so mysteriously? Why did you call me?” Inspector Lee lit a cigarette and leaned against the column.

“I need you to analyze something for me.” Chen Ge took out the seal bag from his backpack. “There’s an iron nail inside this. There’s a blood stain on the tip of the nail. Don’t the police have a DNA databank? Can you help me check if the blood stain matches anyone?”

Inspector Lee accepted the bag, but he did not make any promises. “Was this left behind by the killer?”

Chen Ge nodded.

“Then, why didn’t you send this to the police station? Why did you sneak this to me in private?” Inspector Lee snuffed out the cigarette and puffed out the smoke. He looked at Chen Ge with interest. “You suspect the killer is a police officer?”

Chen Ge did not deny it. “Uncle San Bao, this thing is too complicated. I don’t have the answer myself.”

“You only create problems for me.” Inspector Lee shoved the bag inside his pocket. “The results will be back by tomorrow night.”

“Thank you.”

“No need. It’s what the police should do.”

Inspector Lee turned to leave. Chen Ge called a cab to return to New Century Park. When he was inside the car, his phone rang.

Liu Xianxian? Chen Ge accepted the call. “Hello? Are you feeling better?”

“Yes.”

“Why are you calling?”

“It’s like this.” Liu Xianxian sounded rather flustered. “Can you come to Jiujiang’s Medical University tonight? I’ve asked the man out. I’m not sure whether he likes me or not, so I want you to give me your opinion.”

Chen Ge did not expect that Liu Xianxian would really call him about this. After some consideration, Chen Ge said, “Okay, I’ll be there in a bit.”

After he agreed to Liu Xianxian’s request, the black phone in his other pocket vibrated. He took out the phone and saw the new message.

“The third special visitor has left. You’ve successfully unlocked the mission information! Unlocked Hidden Trial Mission—The Missing Wife!”

Chapter 376: Perhaps he Doesn’t Like Me

“The Missing Wife (One-star Mission): Find Liu Xianxian before midnight.

“Mission Hint: Perhaps he doesn’t love me.

“Do you wish to accept this mission? Warning: Trial Missions are only available for twenty-four hours. If they are not accepted within these twenty-four hours, the scenario will never be unlocked.”

Naturally, Chen Ge accepted it. Since this was just a one-star mission, he didn't think it would that difficult. *I only need to find Liu Xianxian? There's no other requirement?*

Chen Ge had a feeling that the sentence had another meaning, but temporarily, he had no idea what. After hanging up, Chen Ge returned to New Century Park to grab all of his equipment before rushing to Jiujiang Medical University. At 7:40 pm, Chen Ge arrived at his destination and found Liu Xianxian at a nearby teahouse.

“Why are you here?” Chen Ge was curious. The things there were expensive, and Liu Xianxian did not look like she was much of a tea-drinker.

“He prefers a quiet place.” Liu Xianxian was embarrassed. She had put quite some effort into her appearance, but she looked rather pale. “I've booked the private room for you next door, you can hide in there.”

Chen Ge moved to oblige. From his vantage point, he could look clearly into the room next door. Then it was a long wait. Liu Xianxian asked to meet the man at 8 pm. Combining the time Liu Xianxian waited for Chen Ge, she had been waiting for at least half an hour already.

She checked her appearance again and again as she looked out the window carefully. She was both fearful and excited. The man did not show at 8 pm. She took out her phone to call the man, but when she found the man's name on the contact list, she hesitated. “Did something happen to him?”

Liu Xianxian was completely different from when she was with her friends. She asked the waitress for a cup of water. She picked the cup up but, worried that it might ruin her lipstick, she put it down again. She wanted to show the man her best. The man still had not arrived at 8:20 pm. Liu Xianxian looked at the food on the table, but she had no appetite.

She held her phone, and after some hesitance, she finally called the man's number. The call rang, but no one answered.

“Something must have happened to him.” Liu Xianxian looked out the window. The crowd was starting to thin because it was getting late. She waited until 9 pm, and he was still a no-show.

“Let's stop waiting, he won't be coming tonight.” Chen Ge walked out from the room. “From how he treats you, it looks like he doesn't care about you that much.”

“Let's wait a little longer.” Liu Xianxian waited until the teahouse closed, but the man did not show up. They left the teahouse together, Liu Xianxian looking quite devastated. Due to the mission by the black phone, Chen Ge stuck close to Liu Xianxian. “Can you tell me the story between the both of you? Perhaps I can give you some advice.”

Liu Xianxian shook her head, but it was uncertain whether she did not want to share the story or had something that she could not say.

“If you don't tell me anything, how am I supposed to help? If you hold something within your heart for too long, it might ‘decay’. Now you need someone to talk to. Your roommates are a close part of your

life—you walk in the same circle—so telling them might affect your friendship, but I’m different. I’m an outsider who has no interaction with your life; you don’t need to worry about me interrupting your normal life.”

Chen Ge kept trying to loosen Liu Xianxian’s lips, and Liu Xianxian was slowly convinced. The stuff in her heart was piling up so high that she had trouble breathing.

“Say it out loud, you’ll feel much better.” Chen Ge sounded like the boy next door, very warm and friendly.

She paused in thought, and after one last struggle, Liu Xianxian began. “I was brought up by my mother, and I’ve never seen my father. Sometimes, I wonder what my father looks like. Perhaps due to that, when I first saw him, there was a very special feeling.

“With or without the romantic feeling, I just feel safe around him.” Liu Xianxian looked up at the streetlight, the soft light falling on her pained expression. “I was like a child lost in the field, finding a hunter with a torch and a gun.”

“That’s quite an interesting analogy, what happened next?”

“He is much older than I am and has all the good qualities of a mature man. In my eyes, he is a perfect man, and I cannot prevent my heart from falling in love. However, as our interaction increased, I realized that he is rather different from normal men.”

Liu Xianxian’s eyes were wavering. “Liking someone means knowing everything about him. I heard from his close family that his wife died in a car accident seven years ago. It was because I found out about that news that I started to pursue him. Initially, he rejected me, but with my tireless approach, the distance between us closed. It was also at the time that I found out the biggest secret about him.”

Liu Xianxian paused for a long time before she continued. “He is under the impression that his wife is still alive. There are two sets of everything at his home, and he sometimes talks to the air like his wife is standing there.”

“That’s an obvious sign of trauma.”

When Liu Xianxian heard Chen Ge’s assessment, she shook her head with hesitance. “I don’t think he’s sick. He just loves his wife too much.”

“Your mind is muddled from love—that’s why you’re coming up with all these reasons for him. If you really have his interests at heart, you should bring him to a psychologist.”

“You’ll understand what I mean when you see him. I’m not lying to you.” Liu Xianxian saw the number on her phone, and she thanked Chen Ge. “Thank you for everything today. I’ll deal with this myself. I hope that you’ll keep this to yourself.”

“Of course, you have my word.” Seeing Liu Xianxian’s back, the smile on Chen Ge’s face slowly disappeared. He caught a deep hint of despair when she spoke; he had heard the same trace of despair when he interacted with members of the ghost stories society.

“The man Liu Xianxian likes thinks his dead wife is still alive. This is similar to No. 10. In the Pen Spirit’s ‘will’, she overheard No. 10 calling the body on his back his wife.”

Chen Ge was increasingly curious about Liu Xianxian. While no one was watching, he carried his backpack and sneaked into Jiujiang Medical University.

Chapter 377: Big Sister's Video

Liu Xianxian was despondent because her date did not show, so she did not notice Chen Ge, who was trailing her.

She's going back to the dormitory. What should I do? Wait outside the dormitory?

Chen Ge looked around the female dormitory. Even though there were good hiding spots, if he was discovered there, he would definitely be handed over to the police. He looked on as Liu Xianxian entered the dormitory and disappeared up the stairs.

I cannot follow her any longer, but if I leave just like that, the Trial Mission will definitely fail.

Caught in a conundrum, he headed in the direction of the abandoned education block.

Based on the phone spirit's description, Ma Yin and Liu Xianxian leave the bedroom at 1 am every night; it shouldn't be any different tonight. I only need to find a place to wait for them to show up. The abandoned building won't have any people coming at night, and the guards don't normally patrol there.

Chen Ge very easily found the abandoned education block. He climbed to the second floor and kept his eyes on the road. *I feel like such a Peeping Tom, but no one will probably suspect there's someone inside this abandoned building.*

Leaning against the wall, Chen Ge took out his phone to play. *I should have brought the white cat with me. Guarding this place alone is quite boring.*

He googled his own Haunted House online, reading through the latest comments and articles before logging into the video sharing app. He was surprised at how busy his inbox was. He clicked it open and was shocked to see so many of them urging him to update the comic. Of ten comments, about half of them had to do with the horror comic. *Uncle Yan, you're going to be huge!*

After Chen Ge posted Yan Danian's comic on the website, he had stopped following it. He was surprised to find the comic had more than 10,000 comments. Many commenters thought that Chen Ge was the artist and praised him for his talent. Beyond the streams and videos, he was such a good comic artist. They praised him for being a genius.

Thankfully, I didn't upload everything at once last time. Chen Ge clicked through his phone. He had saved Yan Danian's comic into a collection called Ghost Tenants, and he had only uploaded the first part. He opened the inbox and glanced through it, but he could not find any comic website or publisher contacting him.

Looks like the influence is not big enough, but Uncle Yan should be happy knowing so many people like his work.

Chen Ge was reminded of Uncle Yan's disappointed face. He was so sad that even ghosts did not have the heart to bully him. He took out the comic from his pocket and called Uncle Yan's name softly.

Perhaps because Chen Ge had been calling Yan Danian when he was in throes of danger, it had completely ruined the man's hope for life. Chen Ge called the man about ten times, but the middle-aged man that faced the wall refused to turn around.

"Uncle Yan, look at the number of people who enjoyed your work! 10,000 comments, all asking for updates! They're all your fans!" Chen Ge swiped the comments before the comic page, and for the first time, the expression on Yan Danian's face shifted. He was shocked. He did not even imagine there would come a day when his work would get so popular.

"Uncle Yan, don't get too ahead of yourself. This is just a beginning. In the future, you'll gather more fans, and countless publishers will come to you. Your comic might even have the chance to be adapted into a cartoon or movie."

Chen Ge did not know how the business worked, but he tried his best to create a hopeful blueprint for Yan Danian to lay the groundwork for what he was going to say next. "It was the correct choice to follow me. I've told you before, I'll help you fulfil your dream."

In the corridor on the abandoned education block, Chen Ge held the phone and talked about dreams and the future to a comic. As his only listener, Yan Danian believed Chen Ge. He sat in the corner of the comic with his fists gripped tight like he was holding the hope of the future in them.

With Yan Danian watching, Chen Ge uploaded the second part for Ghost Tenants and added at the bottom—Joint production of Western Jiujiang's House of Horrors.

Seeing the comments that rolled in, Yan Danian was even more excited than Chen Ge.

Based on this development, Uncle Yan's third power should be unlocked soon.

Yan Danian was categorized by the black phone as a Lesser Red Specter, but his first two power were support-based, so Chen Ge was anticipating his third power. He arranged the comic pages that the Ghost Tenants would use in the future, and without him realizing it, it was 1 am, and the campus was very silent.

"Are Liu Xianxian and Ma Yin not planning to come out today? Were they influenced by Gao Ru Xue's incident?" Chen Ge was rather bored waiting alone inside the building. He looked down the dark corridor and hoped that some ghost would come down it to quench his boredom.

At 1:48 am, there was finally some movement from the female dormitory. The old dormitory's front door was slowly pushed open, and the two girls walked out.

"Finally, you've arrived." Chen Ge collected everything into his backpack and went downstairs.

...

Ma Yin gently slid the dormitory's door shut. They looked around and made sure no one was watching before running past the surveillance camera. The two sneaked into the nearby lane and headed for the abandoned education block.

"We only have the north-eastern side of the warehouse that we haven't searched. We'll definitely find that statue tonight." Ma Yin looked at how sad Liu Xianxian was, but she did not know how to console her. "Then we'll find all our answers."

With puffy eyes, Liu Xianxian looked at the phone in her hands and sighed with uncertainty. “But we’ve been looking for so many days already. I’m beginning to think that the statue isn’t even real.”

“It has to be real. In the video that my big sister left before she disappeared, there was a description on that statue.” Ma Yin took out her phone and clicked open one of the videos. The video was only thirteen seconds long, but the shot image was quite scary.

The video had probably been shot in secret. The angle was weird; the camera seemed to have been placed under the bed, and the screen was aimed at the room outside.

There was a swinging rope in the middle of the room like someone was planning to hang themselves. There was blood on the floor, and a bloodied bedsheet dangled by the edge of the bed.

There was no dead body captured on the screen, but there was the edge of a bloodied bedsheet squeezed through the dresser door. Facing the bed was a western sculpture, and there were plenty of unfinished sculptures on the table.

The video soon reached its end. The screen shook slightly, and at the last second, the camera turned to the window. At the windowsill, there was a woman with unnatural skin color poking out half of her head, looking into the room.

The screen went dark, and the video ended.

Chapter 378: Someone Has Been Here

“This is the last video my sister sent me before she disappeared. I’ve been searching for this room, paying close attention to any clues in the video. Finally, my hard work was rewarded. I was randomly scrolling through the university forum when I came across a ghost story thread about our school. One of the stories was about a weeping statue.

“According to legend, as long as we can find this statue before midnight, it could help us diagnose the authenticity of any statement. If it is true, it’ll cry tears of blood, and if it’s fake, something scary will happen.”

Ma Yin found the screenshots of said thread on her phone. There was an attached picture of the statue at the end of the thread, and the statue looked similar to the sculpture captured in her sister’s video. It was a western sculpture of a western man. It was larger than a normal person, and he looked ugly. There was a sentence carved into the base—Deceit is the most beautiful, but truths are often the ugliest.

“I private messaged the OP to know how he managed to get the picture, but he didn’t reply. Then, I contacted that person through the teachers. He said that he took the picture at an abandoned warehouse. He thought that the statue matched the story he was telling, so he attached it to the post. Ever since the movement of the campus several years ago, no one has been to this warehouse. If he was telling the truth, then the statue must still be inside that warehouse.”

Ma Yin and Liu Xianxian were close friends who shared everything. Once Ma Yin trusted someone, she would share her every secret.

“Let’s hope we can find it this time. I really want to know the answer.”

The two girls jumped over the blockade and sneaked into the abandoned building.

"Every time we come here, it feels weird, like there's someone here other than us." Since they were afraid light might attract the attention of the security, Ma Yin and Liu Xianxian did not switch on the flashlight on their phones. They touched the wall and slowly walked down the corridor.

"It's quite a waste to keep this building abandoned. I wonder why the school doesn't rent this place out," Ma Yin mumbled to herself. She was actually quite scared, but she did not dare show that before Liu Xianxian. She treated Liu Xianxian as her best friend. When they moved forward, she kept Liu Xianxian behind her to protect her.

The physically smaller Liu Xianxian followed behind Ma Yin. After entering the education block, she also started to feel nervous. "Xiao Yin, after we've been here several times, I reached out to the graduated seniors to ask about it. They said there's a reason this place is abandoned, and it's related to the move of the other courses to a new campus."

"What kind of reason?" Ma Yin was tall and much stronger than normal girls, but that did not mean she was braver.

"It seems to be related to cadavers. This block was sealed up because it was too close to the laboratory block." Liu Xianxian looked out the window. There was a strange phenomenon at Jiujiang Medical University at 2 am. If the campus was separated into four directions—north, south, east, west—the north, south, and east sides of the campus had some lights, but the west side was completely dark.

"According to legend, the largest underground morgue in Jiujiang is within the western side of our school. Wasn't there a tradition to turn off the lights after midnight? It is because, since the cadavers were tired in the morning, they needed to rest at night. Do you believe something like that?" Liu Xianxian's voice was weird, and she looked extremely pale that night.

"That is rather weird."

"There are more weird things about this school. Do you remember what the counselling instructor said when we first registered? Do not go to the western part of the campus after midnight. People asked him why, but he stammered a nonsensical reason. After asking the seniors, there was a student who went out at night and saw someone waving at him. He walked into the western part of the campus at night and saw a cadaver that was ruined inside the lab." The more Liu Xianxian continued, the darker her face became. "There are many similar stories, and I cannot tell which are real and which are fake anymore."

"Liu Xian, we've been searching for several nights already; we cannot give up now." For Ma Yin, Liu Xianxian was her only partner. If Liu Xianxian retreated, she would need to look for the statue related to her sister's disappearance alone.

"I know, I just feel dumb for having this insistence." Liu Xianxian took out her phone and had the urge to delete someone's number from the contact list. They walked to the corner and down the stairs to first floor underground. They turned on their flashlights after making sure that no one was following them.

"This place suddenly feels so cold." The cold draft caressed Ma Yin's hair, and she squeezed to stand beside Liu Xianxian. "There's no ventilation in this place, so I have no idea where the draft comes from."

Their shoulders leaned together, and Ma Yin suddenly realized that Liu Xianxian's body was very cold, like it was frozen.

"Liu Xian, why are you so cold?"

"Nervous."

"Don't worry, I'm here with you. No matter what happens, I'll stay by your side."

They moved down the corridor and did not stop to turn into the rooms on the side but headed straight for the stairs to go down to second floor underground. There were some stains on the stairs. It looked dirty, like someone had dragged something up or down the stairs.

"Seems like someone has been here before us." Ma Yin looked at the water stain on the ground and sniffed at the residual scent in the air. As a medical student, she was familiar with this smell. "It's formalin."

"Formalin is not allowed to be taken out of the lab. How can it be here?" Liu Xianxian knew the usage of formalin—it was to preserve the cadavers. "The underground here is connected to the western side of the campus. Did someone really sneak into the underground morgue? Earlier this year, I heard that someone has been stealing the cadavers to sell on the black market."

"That shouldn't be the case. Even if the person can move the cadavers out of the morgue, how would they transport them out of the school? There is surveillance everywhere." Ma Yin tried to console Liu Xianxian. "Don't read too much into this. There are people who come to maintain the underground morgue once in a while; this is probably their doing."

"In that case, they wouldn't have come through this building but used the front door. I still think something is wrong." Even though she said so, Liu Xianxian went down the stairs faster than Ma Yin. She held onto the wall and raised the flashlight when she reached the bottom of the stairs.

The path split in two. There was a sign on the wall. The right path led to a normal storeroom while the left led to the underground morgue. The water stains on the ground became more obvious, and they were all on the left path.

"Looks like someone really has entered the underground morgue." Ma Yin looked down the left corridor and raised her phone to shine the light down the dark corridor.

Chapter 379: Envy

The corridor was long, and the walls on both sides were painted white. Every few meters was a rusted steel door, and aged police tape was sealed off each of the doors. "We've been here several times already, but we never did notice that this is a corridor used to transport cadavers."

Some medical schools had pathways specifically used to transport cadavers. This type of special pathway was usually underground, and the floor would be flat to ease transportation. The other obvious feature was the layer of white paint on the walls. Other than that, there was not any special decoration.

"Let's stop wasting time standing here. Let's get to the storeroom." Liu Xianxian pulled on Ma Yin's arm and led her down the right corridor. The left led to the underground morgue, and the right was a normal storeroom where various abandoned equipment had been left. The two walked down the corridor for some time when Ma Yin heard footsteps coming from behind them. She stopped and used the flashlight on the camera to shine behind her.

"Xiao Yin, what's wrong?"

"Someone seems to be following us." Ma Yin was not sure herself because when she tried to focus on the noise, the footsteps disappeared again.

"You must be mistaken." Liu Xianxian forced an unnatural smile. Facing fear with a smile, that had become her habit.

"Let's get into the storeroom first. There's nowhere to hide in this corridor." Ma Yin and Liu Xianxian increased in speed until they reached the first turn in the corridor. There was a scratched wooden door. The lock was seriously broken, and there were various black scratches on the door. The most curious thing was that someone had carved the word 'Paradise' on the door.

"This is weird. Before we left, I remember us closing the door." The door was half-open like someone had gone in while they were away.

"Be careful." Ma Yin placed both of her hands on the wooden door to push it open. She stopped at the door and did not rush in. The girl might appear that way, but she was more careful than she looked. She used her phone to scan every corner in the room, but there was nothing out of the ordinary.

"This time, we should stick together instead of separating." Ma Yin took care of Liu Xianxian, walking in front. The block had been sealed up for quite some time already, so logically speaking, the place should have been deserted. Yet, weirdly enough, there was little dust. It was as if someone still went there to clean the place every so often.

Most of the abandoned equipment for Jiujiang Medical University was placed there, including almost every manner of thing imaginable. There were many vials on the racks, and some of them had viscous red liquid inside, like they were preserved human organ.

There were many similar things. If this was a normal person, they would have turned around and left immediately, but as medical students, Ma Yin and Liu Xianxian did not think any of that was scary.

Along the rows of racks, the stuff inside was messier. There were abandoned fire extinguishers, broken photocopiers and computers, and unused tables and chairs piled up in the corner. There were reports stuck inside the drawers, and broken gym equipment sat on the chairs. Further into the storeroom, there were drama costumes abandoned by the drama society, canvases given up by the arts society, and a lot of other junk. When the university moved campus, most of the junk had been deposited down there.

"I've asked the people at the new campus. Before the move, a few of the societies left the more difficult to deal with pieces for the school to deal with. To save money, the school left them in this underground storeroom." Ma Yin walked ahead and used her phone to search amid the mountain of rubbish. "The

only society that I can think of that would have any use for statue and sculpture is the arts society, so we should focus on this section tonight.”

After taking a few more steps, Ma Yin realized that Liu Xianxian was still standing where she was.

“What’s wrong with you?”

“Look at that.” Liu Xianxian pointed at computer that sat in the corner. The plug for the monitor was plugged inside the socket. “When we were here the last time, I was afraid that the plug might cause a short-circuit, so I removed the plug, but now the plug is still inside the socket.”

“Looks like someone has indeed been in here. Could it be a thief?”

“Why would a thief purposely come here to use the computer? Furthermore, this is an abandoned model. I don’t think it can be operated anymore.” Liu Xianxian pressed the power button, and to her surprise, the computer powered on. The screen shone a cold light, but the image froze, like it could not process beyond that.

“Just ignore it, we should focus on our search. Even if someone did sneak in, it won’t affect our progress.” Ma Yin turned to focus on the corner where most of the arts and crafts stuff sat. She moved some of the amateur paintings aside to look for the statue. Liu Xianxian stood where she was, staring at the monitor. It was unclear whether it was a flicker in the system or the shadows, but she could swear that she saw the shape of a human on screen. She leaned in closer to take the look, and the person’s face became increasingly clearer. It looked like a bald man, and his face was twice the size of a normal person’s.

“Liu Xianxian, come help me!” Ma Yin shouted, carrying a large canvas.

“Okay.” Liu Xianxian removed the plug and walked to help Ma Yin with the canvas. The two worked together to move all the canvases out of the way, and beyond all of that was a wooden cupboard.

“There should be something inside this cupboard,” Ma Yin said as she moved to open the door. However, when her finger touched the door, she immediately jerked back.

“What’s wrong?”

“There’s something on the surface.” Ma Yin rubbed her fingers and gave it a sniff. “Why is there formalin on the door handle?”

The formalin on the stairs outside could be explained as an accidental splash, but what about the cupboard behind the canvases? That was too weird.

“Could there be a cadaver hiding inside this cupboard?” Ma Yin’s heart raced, and her breathing became uneven. She took in a deep breath before edging the door open. She looked inside the gap, and there were no bodies inside the cupboard, just several paintings.

Ma Yin sighed in relief as she took the paintings out. However, when she saw the content of one of the paintings, her heart squeezed again.

The painting style was rather derivative. It was a painting of medical students operating on the cadaver, but the weirdest thing was that the drawing was painted from the cadaver’s perspective.

Lying inside the cold storage, looking at the tightly-covered medical students, the scalpel in his hands, and then at the cadaver's own body.

There was an emotion that was running through the painting. It was an envy of life, an envy of that supple skin, those movable joints, the things that he had lost. He wished that he could have that instead of lying on the slab, unable to do anything as the students cut open his body.

Chapter 380: The Third Person

"The painter is quite creative, painting this from the perspective of the cadaver." Ma Yin looked at the painting in her hands. She was influenced by the emotions elicited by the painting, and she did not feel so good.

"It's quite weird, don't you think? Painting from the cadaver's perspective, as if it's a living person... it looks off." Liu Xianxian glanced at it once before she lost interest. "I have a feeling this painting is for the dead. Perhaps the painter is the cadaver."

"Stop joking." Ma Yin put the painting aside. When she prepared to pick up the second painting, her finger accidentally brushed against the canvas, and it felt wet, "It still hasn't dried?"

She stood where she was with her mind blank. "The painting feels like it just been painted. There has to have been someone else in this storeroom recently, but why would they paint in here? And why paint such a weird topic?"

Ma Yin thought about what Liu Xianxian said before they entered the building. A student saw someone waving at him when he passed by the western section of the campus, and following the shadow, he discovered a seriously ruined cadaver.

Could the painter really be the cadaver? A scary thought appeared in her mind. Ma Yin could not stop herself as she staggered backward. She wanted to stay away from the cupboard, but she was curious about the other painting. Eventually, curiosity won over fear. Ma Yin walked to the cupboard and took out the second painting.

It was an oil painting, and the colors used in the painting were quite depressing. A gray sky, a black crow poking at a startling white body, and a decaying arm poking through the ground.

Such a depressing view of the world, there's no color at all.

Ma Yin turned to the third painting. It was a painting of a young girl holding an apple. This painting was completely different from the other two. The girl was wearing a cute, vibrant outfit, standing under the neon lights. The apple in her hands was a burst of red. From the background to the character, it was filled with brightness and color, but the painting still gave one an uncomfortable feeling.

The reason was the main character. The little girl was completely different from the rest of the painting. Her exposed skin showed an unnatural gray-ashy color. She held the apple in her hand, wanting to give it a bite, but she knew, even if she did, she would not know the taste of apple. There was a simple desire on the girl's face; she wanted to know the taste of apple.

Putting down the third painting, Ma Yin looked at the last painting. It was a realistic painting, and it had a dead person as its subject. A normal person might have been uncomfortable, but Ma Yin was unaffected. After her first autopsy class, she understood something. A dead person was categorically different from a living one. A dead person was no different from a cold machine, comprised of complicated parts, but it was a machine that could not run again.

The man in the painting looked at his body, probably wondering whether he could still be called human. After staring at the human portrait in the painting for a long time, Ma Yin suddenly remembered something. She took out her phone and clicked open the video that her sister had sent her before her disappearance. When the video reached twelve-second mark, she pressed pause.

The camera was aimed at the window. A woman was hanging on the windowsill, exposing half of her face. Comparing the face to the painting, Ma Yin suddenly realized that the color of the woman's skin was similar to all the human characters in the paintings!

What's going on? One is real since it's captured on film, but the other is fake because they were painted.

Her arm shook involuntarily. She had a feeling that the woman in the video and the people in the paintings were all looking at her. She put the paintings back into the cupboard and closed it—only then did the feeling disappear.

The main characters of the paintings are all cadavers, so in that case, the woman climbing on the window is also a cadaver? But how could a cadaver climb onto the windowsill?

When the video stopped, the woman by the window was staring at the person behind the camera. Through the screen, Ma Yin felt like the woman was staring at her.

There was a complicated emotion in her eyes—that is not something possible for cadaver.

Ma Yin closed the video. She was quite afraid staring at the woman.

My sister's disappearance has to do with this woman and these few paintings are my clues.

With her hand on the cupboard door, Ma Yin touched the sticky substance, and she was confused. *There is residual formalin on the door, and the paintings are painted from the perspective of the cadaver. Sis disappeared after she saw something similar to a dead body, did the cadavers really come back to life?*

"Xiao Yin!" Liu Xianxian's voice came from behind her. This cowardly girl sounded like she had walked deeper into the storeroom alone.

"Where are you?" Ma Yin could only hear Liu Xianxian's voice, but she could not see her. There was too much trash in the storeroom blocking her view.

"Xiao Yin!" Liu Xianxian called again. Ma Yin, who had been spooked by the paintings and the video, was cautious. She picked up a broken chair lying to the side and walked toward the sound of the voice. Walking through the racks, she saw a straight shadow standing in an inconspicuous corner of the room.

"Liu Xian?" Ma Yin held the chair with one hand as she raised her phone. Before the light hit the shadow, she felt someone touch her shoulder. "Who is it?"

Her arm moved, and Ma Yin swung the chair behind her. Just as the chair was about to hit the person, she saw who it was and forced herself to stop. The chair brushed against the person and knocked into the rack, creating a loud bang.

She pulled back her arm. Liu Xianxian was also scared because she did not think Ma Yin would react so violently. "Xiao Yin, what's wrong with you tonight?"

Putting down the chair, Ma Yin took in a deep breath. "What's wrong with me? Were you trying to scare me to death by tapping on my shoulder like that?"

"But we've been here several times already. There's nothing to be afraid of." Liu Xianxian thought she saw a twisted expression on Ma Yin's face for that moment.

"This time's different. Now I can be sure someone has been in here before us!" Ma Yin was suddenly reminded of something. She aimed her phone at the corner!

"Where is he?" The corner was completely empty.

"Xiao Yin, stop scaring me. Who is here other than us?" Liu Xianxian stood behind Ma Yin. "Even if someone was here, he must have left already."

"No, he's still here. I just saw him with my own eyes!" Ma Yin could not have imagined that, while they were searching through the storeroom, there was another person in there with them. "We have to leave immediately. I have a very bad feeling."

Ma Yin picked up the chair from the floor and tried to persuade Liu Xianxian to leave.

"No, we cannot go now." Liu Xianxian stood her ground as she held onto Ma Yin's arm. "I just came back from the other side of the storeroom. I found the statue."