

## Horrors 51

### Chapter 51: The Choice

With dark circles under his eyes, Chen Ge stood before the mirror hugging the dolls. *One more minute until midnight.*

The lights in the bathroom were off, and Chen Ge stared at his reflection in the mirror. Afraid that he might miss out on some details, Chen Ge did not dare to blink with his palms on the sink and his face close to the mirror.

He focused all of his attention on the mirror. When there were only several seconds away to midnight, the phone in Chen Ge's pocket vibrated.

*A call? Who would call at such a time?*

The sudden phone call startled Chen Ge. He hurriedly pulled out his phone and the caller ID was Inspector Lee.

*Has there been some kind of accident?*

Chen Ge answered the call and put the phone beside his ear. "Uncle San Bao, have you got an update?"

On the other end of the phone, Inspector Lee sounded serious and hurried. "Zhang Peng is still on the loose, but we've come to the conclusion that he's still around western Jiujiang! You have to be careful! The man is incredibly dangerous and cunning. His actions and thinking are different from normal, and we cannot rule out the possibility that he will return for you!"

"But didn't the police set up a perimeter around New Century Park yesterday? With injuries on both of his arms, he shouldn't have been able to get far." From Chen Ge's perspective, he had been sure Zhang Peng was going to be captured.

"There was an unexpected development. For now, I cannot give you the details, but what I can say is, last night, one of the officers who managed to intercept the suspect experienced some kind of trauma. He's currently in a deep coma and being looked after at the hospital."

"What?" Chen Ge's expression shifted, and he was about to say something when he glanced at the mirror on the wall out of the corner of his eye. A bloody Arabic number of 1 had surfaced on the mirror when he was not paying attention.

"But don't worry, the police are closing in on him. Justice always prevails."

Inspector Lee continued to talk on the phone, but Chen Ge's mind was already elsewhere. He placed the phone down and looked at the mirror dumbly.

*When did this appear? The mirror monster has already left, so why would the number still appear on the mirror?*

Chen Ge was reminded of what he had seen in the bathroom the day before, where half of the mirror monster's body was outside the mirror and Zhang Peng had voluntarily walked forward to merge himself with the creature.

*What does this number really mean? Yesterday it was 2, and today it is 1. Does this mean it'll become zero tomorrow?*

The dropping number caused Chen Ge's eyes to dim with concern. *After Zhang Peng was possessed by the mirror monster, the number started to drop. When Inspector Lee mentioned the coma of the officer, the number dropped again. Does the number represent the number of victims? The mirror monster needs three living victims?*

Regardless of the real meaning of the number, Chen Ge could not wait anymore because it was now related to innocent lives. A great sense of urgency appeared in his heart.

*The mirror monster is growing stronger and stronger; tomorrow night might be my last chance already.*

Chen Ge picked up a dirty cloth to wipe the number on the mirror away; he could not play it safe anymore. After a few more words with Inspector Lee, he ended the call and then entered the Props Room with the black phone.

*It is now a new day; the Daily Missions will have refreshed already. Now, the only thing that might help me are the Red Specter's Bloody Heart Mission or the new Nightmare Mission.*

Chen Ge tapped into the Daily Mission interface of the app.

Easy Mission: A normal Haunted House experience should not create permanent trauma to its visitors; I hope you understand this simple theory. Please improve the Haunted House's security by inspecting the security threats hidden around the Haunted House.

Normal Mission: You've achieved the criteria to enable the first expansion of the Haunted House, do search for a suitable location soon! Due to space limitations, you are unable to perform any Trial Mission to unlock scenarios!

Nightmare Mission: There has always been a second occupant inside your room, wouldn't you like to meet said person?

(Beware! The more difficult the mission, the more dangerous it'll be, so please choose carefully!)

After reading all three missions, Chen Ge's eyes fell on the Nightmare Mission. *The other person inside my room? Just the description of it makes me uncomfortable.*

Chen Ge knew the possible danger of the Nightmare Mission perfectly well. After a long hesitation, he chose to open the Red Specter's page instead.

"Are you sure you want to accept Zhang Ya's Bloody Heart Mission? Warning! This mission contains a certain level of danger!"

The app kindly provided Chen Ge with a warning. He rubbed his temples, unable to come to a decision.

*Both of these missions have a certain degree of risk and danger. However, the rewards of the Nightmare Mission are random; there's a high chance it might just give me another supportive skill. In comparison, the Bloody Heart Mission... Zhang Ya has been given the special title of Red Specter and even her own personal page on the app, this means that she is probably a powerful specter, at least several levels higher than the mirror monster. With her help, I should be able to survive this crisis.*

After thorough analysis, with a grit of his teeth, Chen Ge clicked on Zhang Ya's Bloody Heart Mission.

"Are you sure you want to accept Zhang Ya's Bloody Heart Mission?"

"Yes!"

The red interface started to change and peel off like wilting roses, and soon, a new message appeared on screen.

"Anderson's Fairy Tales Volume One, Book Three—Red Dancing Shoes: Once upon a time, there was a pair of ruby red dancing shoes that could make the dancer who wore them light on her feet and perfect at her dance. However, none of the dancers dared put them on because they were a pair of magical shoes, one that would make its dancer keep on dancing until they perished from exhaustion.

"Please arrive at Western Jiujiang's Private Academy within one hour from accepting the mission and locate Zhang Ya's red dancing shoes before dawn.

"Warning: Don't be late on your first date, or she'll be very unhappy."

Chen Ge did not know what to feel after reading the mission details. The Private Academy had been abandoned several years earlier due to unknown reasons. However, Chen Ge had heard plenty of scary rumors about it.

*My first date with a girl is at an abandoned school after midnight, am I that unlucky at love?*

The mission required him to be at the Private Academy within one hour. Chen Ge calculated the distance in his mind, and realized he still have some time left.

*The Private Academy is at this part of town, so not that far away from me. The biggest issue is going there after midnight. Sigh, I'd better go take a bath first; no matter what, this is my first time.*

After a quick shower, Chen Ge changed into a clean outfit. He stood before the mirror to inspect his image.

*There are fifty minutes left, why am I feeling so nervous all of a sudden?*

## **Chapter 52: First Date**

After taking a few deep breaths and splashing cold water on his face, Chen Ge finally calmed down.

"It's time to go."

Chen Ge retrieved the backpack that he had used last time and placed Zhang Ya's love letter, a power bank, and tool mallet into it. After the lesson from last time, he put the penknife directly in his pocket

and the doll left behind by his parents inside his shirt pocket. He was bulging all over the place, but at least he felt safer.

After packing everything he needed, Chen Ge locked the Haunted House and rushed out of New Century Park. It was 12:15 am, so there was little traffic on the road. He waited for another ten minutes before he managed to hail a cab.

“Sir, please get me to Western Jiujiang’s Private Academy. I’m in a hurry, so please drive faster.”

“No problem, get in.”

The driver was an easy-going middle-aged uncle, and the radio in the car was playing hit songs from the 90s. Chen Ge sat in the backseat and used this downtime to search for online information related to his current mission.

The first thing mentioned by the phone when he accepted the Bloody Heart Mission was Anderson’s Red Dancing Shoes, so that was the first thing Chen Ge looked for on the internet. He managed to find the original source, and after skimming through it, Chen Ge felt rather petrified.

The original plot was not much different from the black phone’s version. It described the story of a young girl who was gifted a pair of beautiful red dancing shoes. She loved them so much that she wore them everywhere, including to church, where she was cursed to dance forever. She was afraid, helpless, and exhausted. In the end, she begged the woodman to chop her legs off, and then came the most curious part of the fairy tale. After the legs were chopped off, they danced away into the forest still wearing the red dancing shoes.

*Is this even a fairy tale?*

It added to his nervousness since his mission was searching for Zhang Ya’s red dancing shoes.

*When I won the cursed love letter, the black phone did provide a brief description of Zhang Ya. She was wearing a bloodied school uniform and red dancing shoes at the time of her death, so could the fairy tale be real? The red dancing shoes couldn’t be taken off after they were put on?*

Chen Ge’s skin crawled. Different from his previous missions, this time he was going face to face with a Red Specter, one that had a Bloody Heart Mission, something that could only be given by specters with heavy resentment.

*Looks like the key to tonight’s mission is the red dancing shoes.*

Chen Ge read the fairy tale again for a few times; the main lesson to be learned here was to not be vain but be humble at all time.

*Was there even a reason for the black phone to refer to this fairy tale at the start of the mission?*

He could not figure out an answer, so he decided to focus his energy on searches related to Western Jiujiang’s Private Academy. The school was closed after just two years of operation and had been abandoned since then. With regards to the reason for its closure, there were plenty of rumors online. Some said it had to do with lack of budget, whereas others complained about the high semester fees.

Chen Ge scrolled through all the information patiently, and Zhang Ya's name did not even appear once, like she had nothing to do with the school at all.

*There has to be something more sinister about the closure than what's been speculated online!*

Chen Ge looked at the streetlights out the window that seemed to be running backwards, and he squinted his eyes in thought. *Just what kind of ending could a girl experience to turn her into a Red Specter? Why would she harbor such deep resentment? What does all of that have to do with red dancing shoes?*

While Chen Ge was deep in his thought, the volume of the radio picked up. He turned toward the source with shock and realized the driver uncle had been looking at him via the rear-view mirror.

"What's on your mind, young man? You have such a sad face." The driver was a quintessential chatterbox. He had attempted to start a conversation with Chen Ge when Chen Ge entered the car, but Chen Ge had ignored the man mostly because he was busy looking up information.

"So much has changed in my life recently that I'm struggling to get my head around it, feeling rather swamped at the moment." Chen Ge smiled politely as he put his phone away.

"Slow and steady wins the race. I'm sure everything will work out in the end. If you're that stressed, do what I do: play some disco music, and after a few shakes, you'll feel much better." The driver grooved along to the music.

*At least the man is optimistic,* thought Chen Ge.

"By the way, why are you going to the Private Academy so late at night? That place is mostly abandoned, and it's not close to any residential area."

Chen Ge's lips fell open and eventually he answered, "Going on a date."

"A date? At this kind of ungodly hour?" The driver glanced back at Chen Ge.

"It's true. I don't know how to explain it; the girl is a bit hard to please and has some weird quirks." Chen Ge tried to normalize it as best as he could. After all, he had not been asked out on a date before, and being invited to one did make him feel quite good about himself.

"That's a good thing! What are you worried about, worried that she won't like you? Then again, what kind of person goes to a date dressed like you? Listen to me, even guys need to know how to dress these days. Look at that backpack, it goes against the rest of your outfit."

The floodgate of the driver's mouth had been opened, and Chen Ge did not even know how to respond. A normal person going on a date would have been happy and overjoyed, but his date was more like a coercion and a desperate move to save himself than an actual date.

"A gentleman mustn't be too forward, don't start the conversation with random topics like the weather, compliment her, and be a good listener. After all, the first impression is very important..." Listening to the driver's advice, Chen Ge had half a mind to play Wedding Dress on his phone so that everyone could have a little peace and quiet.

The taxi zoomed through the night. The cars on the road and the buildings beside it had gotten increasingly sparse; even the streetlights had started to disappear. The signs of civilization outside the window started to disappear, and the road was slowly swallowed up by the forest.

The driver glanced at the GPS and asked Chen Ge, “Are you sure you got the right address? Other than an abandoned school, there’s nothing down the road.”

“Yes, I’m sure, just drop me off near the school. How much?”

“19, do you mind paying me via WeChat? I just started my shift, and I don’t have spare change on me.”

“No problem.”

As Chen Ge grabbed his phone out of his pocket, the penknife bounced out of it as well. The knife sat quietly on the cushion, causing the driver who spotted it to lean surreptitiously forward. The driver moved his hand to lower the volume of the radio. As he did so, he stealthily used his pinkie finger to press a button on the machine.

None of this escaped Chen Ge’s eyes. However, there was nothing he could do but continue to smile. He believed the uncle had mistaken him for some kind of late-night burglar.

“Transaction successful.” Chen Ge put away his phone and glanced at the driver seat. “Uncle, you’re recording this to report to the police?”

The driver, who was in the middle of drinking from a bottle of water, coughed violently as he waved his hands about vehemently.

“I can understand why you’re doing that but...” Chen Ge turned to look at the eerie outline of the school in the dark.

“...I’m really here for a date.”

### **Chapter 53: The Chair Is Moving**

The driver’s face was pale, and he laughed awkwardly. “Then, good luck to you.”

“Thank you, so do you mind stopping the recording now?” Chen Ge flashed a smile that he thought was friendly. “This is just a misunderstanding.”

“Of course,” the driver answered readily. He pressed some random button on the machine. After driving for another two or three meters, the red light on the driver’s walkie-talkie lit up. He pressed it lightly, and before he could say anything, a rough, gravelly voice appeared.

“Lao Liu, you’re also near Western Jiujiang’s Private Academy? What is wrong with people tonight? I also have a passenger with me who wants to go there. Actually, we’re quite close. By the way, what is this message that you sent to the group? ‘I am meld postage?’”

“It’s nothing, just focus on your passenger.” The driver swiped the sweat on his forehead away and quickly hung up on the walkie-talkie.

“That should be I am held hostage, right? Uncle, didn’t you say you trust me?” Chen Ge asked with his eyebrow raised. Afraid that the driver uncle might just call the cops on him, he said, “You can drop me right here.”

“Yes!” The driver was quick to follow his instruction. Chen Ge even managed to see that the man’s legs were shaking.

Chen Ge looked around to make sure he did not leave behind anything. After he got out and closed the door, he looked up and saw the running sign on top of the taxi say—‘I am being held hostage, please call the police!’

“Uncle, you sure are creative.”

The taxi left Chen Ge like it had grown wings. Several seconds later, the several hundred meters around Chen Ge fell silent. It was a starless night like it was going to rain soon. The rainclouds were hanging low in the sky, blocking out all light. Chen Ge pulled out his phone to look at the time; there were still eight minutes left until the designated time.

*Just now, inside the car, the person on the walkie-talkie said he’s also bringing a passenger to the Private Academy. That person is coming here at 1 am, could it have something to do with me?*

Chen Ge reminded himself to be careful. If not for the time limitation, he probably would have hidden himself in the brush by the side of the road to see who was following him.

*Only eight minutes left. I’d better go familiarize myself with the layout of the school first. I’ll need all the advantages I can get.*

The area surrounding Western Jiujiang’s Private Academy was a piece of deserted land. There were no streetlights, only a single road cutting through heavy forest and shrubbery.

Flipping on the flashlight on his phone, Chen Ge followed the road for another hundred meters before reaching the abandoned school’s front gate. The chains and the iron bars had already rusted together. The gate was too heavy to even budge. Looking through the bars, all Chen Ge could see was darkness.

*How do I get in?*

Chen Ge paced around the gate. He tossed his backpack over the gate first before taking several steps back. With a running start, he grabbed hold of the bricks on the wall as he jumped over the outside wall.

The school compound was not big; the whole area could be seen with one glance. There were several tall silhouettes standing in the dark like solitary watchmen. The school’s sign had long since been removed. Chen Ge himself did not know what the real name of the school was. Like everyone else in the city, he only knew it as Western Jiujiang’s Private Academy.

The overgrown shrubbery had swallowed up most of the path. It scratched Chen Ge’s legs at every step, making him feel both ticklish and painful.

*I’ve managed to arrive within the designated time limit; now my mission is to find Zhang Ya’s red dancing shoes.*

Chen Ge pulled out the mallet from his backpack. Feeling the icy metallic touch on his skin, Chen Ge felt much safer.

Using his phone as guidance, Chen Ge walked deeper into the school. He only took several steps before he felt something was wrong. He stopped moving and took several steps back.

*Is it my imagination? How come it feels like there is something pushing me into the school? And when I tried to walk backwards, there was a mysterious force blocking me from behind.*

Chen Ge turned to look over his shoulder, but there was nothing there. He used the phone to shower some light behind him, and there was nothing like ghost or spirit as he has imagined.

*Could it be that she's already here? Standing behind me? Only I can't see her?* Chen Ge shivered. The thought of swinging the mallet at the space behind him cropped up in his mind, but he thought, *What if Zhang Ya is really behind me and this swing angers her?*

He was a mere Haunted House owner; he was practically defenseless stranded in this deserted school. He shuddered, thinking about the ending should he manage to anger a baleful specter.

*In any case, I should go in first.*

Chen Ge pulled his backpack higher as he walked into the school holding up his phone and the mallet. The night darkened, and a draft picked up; it even carried a light dusting of rain with it.

*The most probable locations where I will find the red dancing shoes are either the female changing room at the dance studio or Zhang Ya's former bedroom. I'll have to focus on these two locations.*

Chen Ge headed toward the building that was closest to him. The trees inside the school had grown into twisted shapes, and the wild grass had grown up to Chen Ge's waist. There were statues that littered the school compound, and most of them were human figures. All in all, the place radiated an air of eeriness in the dark.

*The girl's dormitory?*

The dormitory building was not tall, only four-stories high. However, it did look creepy, probably due to an extended period of abandonment. The glass door of the building was locked up tight using a metal chain. Chen Ge leaned against the glass to take a closer look.

The doors on both sides of the dark corridor were tightly closed, but curious enough, a solitary chair sat in the middle of the corridor facing away from the bedroom door.

*A single chair is left right in the middle of the corridor? Is there some special meaning to this?*

Chen Ge leaned back from the glass door. *Both the main gate and the hostel entrance have been locked, and the corridor doesn't seem to have any trash in it. This goes to show that when they were closing the school, they cleaned the place up first, so why did they leave a chair right in the middle of the corridor? Just a mere coincidence?*

*If the chair was purposely left behind by the school management, then what is the meaning of it? If it was not left behind by the school, then who moved the chair to the middle of the corridor after the place was locked up?*



Chen Ge aimed his phone at the glass door. The chair was placed around five meters away from the entrance, and there was a broken hall light right above it.

*The light is already broken, and the electrical wiring is even exposed. Chair and wiring, is it me or that looks like a hanging scene?*

Honestly, after seeing this curious scene, Chen Ge's heart had started to palpitate.

*I'm probably just overthinking.*

He looked left and right. The breeze caused the leaves to rustle. The school after dark was hauntingly creepy.

*I can't scare myself for no reason. After all, Zhang Ya, the Red Specter, is the scariest presence at this school. I have her love letter, so who dares to challenge me? Considering the situation, this was the only way Chen Ge could console himself. Furthermore, this is just an affection mission. To put it simply, it's a special kind of date. There's nothing to be worried about.*

He gave himself a pep talk, and when he was done, he walked back toward the glass door with the mallet. He was about to smash the door when his eyes caught a shocking detail.

The chair that should have been right under the hall light had moved one meter away from the light fixture. It seemed to have moved forward.

*F\*ck!* This was the first time Chen Ge experienced something like this. *What just happened?*

#### **Chapter 54: Arts Activities Center**

Staring right at the wooden chair in the middle of the corridor, Chen Ge stood at the ready, gripping the mallet tightly. He waited for ten seconds, and the chair remained unmoved.

*Is it because I'm watching it?*

Chen Ge walked forward and turned on his phone's recording function before cradling it within the chains on the door. Then, he walked back to the abandoned garden outside the building and waited patiently.

The school at midnight was unsettlingly quiet; there was not even the sound of a bird or insect chirping. About three minutes later, Chen Ge returned to the dormitory; he had prepared himself for the worst. However, when he stood at the glass door, he saw that the chair was still where it was, just one meter away from the broken hall light.

*Didn't move? What's going on?*

Chen Ge walked to the door and picked up the phone from the chain. He looked through the video and saw nothing out of the ordinary. The chair sat in the middle of the corridor just as it should.

*It'll only move when it's around a living human?*

When the thought appeared in his mind, Chen Ge instantly felt something was wrong. He turned to look down the corridor, and the chair had moved two meters ahead again; it was now incredibly close to the glass door!

*It moved forward again? What does that mean? It only moves when I am close, does this mean it wants something from me?*

It would have been a lie to say he was not afraid, but Chen Ge's tolerance for fear was much higher than most, so he managed to maintain a clear mind under such situation.

*The school is clearly haunted, but before I understand why, I should try my best to avoid these things.*

Chen Ge actually wanted to smash the glass door and rushed in to bash the chair into pieces. However, considering the blind spots inside the building, he was afraid there were threats hidden in corners that he could not see. He was afraid that after entering the building, it was not the chair that would snap but himself.

*Tonight's main mission is to locate that pair of red dancing shoes. As long as this weird stuff doesn't interrupt with my progress, there's no reason for me to interact with it.* Chen Ge grabbed his phone and retreated from the door. *I'd better go investigate other places first. I can always return if I can't find the dancing shoes. After all, the mission is considered successful as long as I locate them before sunrise; there is still plenty of time.*

Chen Ge committed the location of the girl's dormitory to memory before retracing his step back to the school gate. He switched his phone off and squatted near the main gate, holding the mallet in his hand.

*Based on the time, the taxi behind me should have arrived already, so why is the road still so dark?*

A car's headlights would be extremely eye-catching against the total darkness, but Chen Ge waited for a long time without seeing any source of light heading toward the school.

*Could there have been an accident?*

This detail had not left his mind. Chen Ge knew there was no such thing as coincidence in this world; the person who followed him to Western Jiujiang's Private Academy had some motive of their own.

*The opponent probably knew that I would wait for them, so they came out from the car earlier and walked the rest of the way on foot? If that's the case, then this is troublesome.*

Chen Ge wished that he was wrong. He already had more than enough on his plate as it was.

*In any case, I'll need to pick up pace. I have two advantages on my side: I've familiarized myself with the surrounding since I got here first, and I have Zhang Ya on my side. She won't watch me get bullied on her home turf, right?*

Perhaps Chen Ge's eyes had gotten used to the darkness, or maybe it was the effect of the Ying-Yang Vision, but things were no longer that blurry in the dark.

*Those in the light open themselves to being hunted by those in the dark.*

Chen Ge did not turn on his phone but headed toward another building in the dark. The tallest building in the school was the education building. It was five-stories tall, and behind it was a field that was unkempt and overgrown. On the other end of the field was a building that sat itself apart from other buildings.

The building stood out because it had faded red paint.

*The education building is for classes, so the dancing shoes won't be there; the possibility is even lower for the boy's dormitory. I'd better go take a look at the red building then.*

Chen Ge walked along the outer perimeter of the field before he reached the front door of the curious building.

The building was as tall as the girl's dormitory, but it was only two thirds the size. Once he got close, Chen Ge noticed how truly unusual this building was. There was a wooden sign that was placed before the front door, and two conspicuous words were painted on it with red ink—NO ENTRY!

*What is the purpose of this building?*

Curiosity is part of human nature. Chen Ge's desire to enter the building only rose after reading the warning sign. *Something must have happened here several years ago—maybe the red dancing shoes I'm looking for are inside.*

Chen Ge walked around the wooden sign and saw the front door was sealed up with two locks.

*I could break the door down with the mallet, but it'll create too much commotion; that might attract the attention of the person who is following me.*

Chen Ge thus shied away from the door and walked around the edge of the building. There, he saw a window that was seriously worn—even a large piece of the glass was missing.

*This can be my point of entry.* Chen Ge extended his hand through the window to open the lock from within. To play it safe, he waited for several minutes to ensure that no one was inside before he jumped in.

He closed the window and moved everything to how it was before. Chen Ge did not dare lower his guard as he surveyed his surroundings. He had landed himself in an artist studio. The walls were pasted with the students' handiwork, and marble models sat on the shelves.

*This place does look creepy, but it is no competition for my Haunted House.*

Chen Ge walked through the rows of marble models as he headed for the room's back door. He looked through the door's window and saw a banner with the words 'Arts Activities Center' hanging on the corridor.

*Looks like I'm at the right place.* Chen Ge pulled the door open slowly. Perhaps because it had not been used for a long time, the sound of the door sliding on its hinges was grating on Chen Ge's ears.

*Calm down, just leave immediately after you find the shoes.*

Since he was inside an enclosed building, Chen Ge switched on his phone again. The dim light did not bring him any comfort. If anything, it only heightened the fear in Chen Ge's heart.

Chen Ge looked through the first-floor rooms one by one. All of them were artist studios. In fact, some of them still had easels and paintings that had been left behind.

*This building has four stories; the dance studio I'm looking for is probably on another floor.*

Armed with his phone and the mallet, Chen Ge headed up the stairs. When he reached the second floor, his heart started to race, and his back was covered with chills.

Because as he turned to look down the corridor of the second floor, there sat a wooden chair.

*This thing again?*

The muscles in Chen Ge's hand grew taut, as he gripped the mallet even tighter.

## **Chapter 55: Five Girls**

The chair was placed right in the middle of the corridor, so if Chen Ge want to enter the second floor, he had to walk past it. The memory of what he had seen at the girl's dormitory was still fresh in Chen Ge's mind. These chairs seemed to have the tendency to get close to living humans.

Hiding at the staircase, he started to hesitate.

*It has a back for people to lean on, and it looks different from all the other chairs I've seen in this building. It seems to have been moved here from someplace else, but why would someone do that?*

Upon closer inspection, the chair looked similar to the one Chen Ge had seen inside the girl's dormitory; it was likely one of the chairs the school management assigned to the dormitory rooms.

Chen Ge used the camera on his phone to zoom in on the sign on one of the doors; it said something related to vocal training. *The dance studio is not on the second floor, it seems— should I just head to the third floor? But what if there's another wooden chair on the third floor's corridor? If it starts to chase after me, won't I be blocked from both sides?*

As the creepy image flashed across his mind, Chen Ge decided to enter the second-floor corridor. The corridor was so shadowy that Chen Ge could not see the end. The doors on both sides were closed, and the windows were crusted with a thick layer of dust, blocking Chen Ge of the view inside.

Chen Ge took deliberate steps. He did not think to hurry simply because of the possible threat from the wooden chair. In fact, for Chen Ge, the abandoned classrooms on both sides seemed scarier than the chair.

*I wonder how long it has been since a living soul stepped into this place. The dust on the floor is so thick, and I have no way of dealing with the footprints that I've left. If the person following me has also entered this building, I'll definitely be discovered.*

Even in this situation, Chen Ge did not forget about the hidden threat of the third party. *I have get this over with as soon as possible!*

The light on Chen Ge's phone wavered as his arms moved. He inched closer to the wooden chair.

*In reality, there's nothing really scary about this, right? What can a wooden chair really do?*

Chen Ge walked around the chair, and it gave him the feeling that it was just a wooden chair and nothing more.

*Maybe I should take a closer look at it...*

As the thought cropped up in Chen Ge's mind, he had already put it into motion. He knocked the chair to its side, and it was then that he noticed the handwriting underneath the chair.

*Qian Yujiao? That sounds like the name of a girl.*

In any case, the appearance of the name confirmed Chen Ge's earlier suspicion. The chair wasn't native to the Activities Centre but belonged to a specific individual. When the school hosted large events, the management would have the students bring their own chairs. To prevent confusion, many would jot down their name underneath their chair.

*Does this mean there's also a name underneath the chair in the girl's dormitory?*

Chen Ge memorized the name. After some hesitation, he decided not to break the chair but placed it inside one of the empty classrooms. *The longer I stay here, the more uncomfortable I feel. I'd better head up to the third floor soon.*

He returned via the route that he had come from and climbed up the stairs to the third floor. The corridor was empty this time. Chen Ge pushed open the door for some of the classrooms. The tables and chairs were all pushed to the back of the room, and parts of the wall had been repainted—it was rather obvious because the wall had two different hues.

*The school was already closing, so why did they waste money to repaint the wall? For whom is this for?*

Chen Ge's experience at Ping An Apartments provided him with a possibility. *It's probably to hide something.*

He used the mallet to peel at the paint, but weirdly enough, the wall behind the new paint was completely normal; there were no blood stains or weird marks.

*No, there has to be something more than this.*

Chen Ge continued his tour of the classrooms. He realized that not all the classrooms had been coated with new paint. There were spots that had been repainted, and some of them were curiously close to the indoor piping.

*This building's water drainage system was probably updated before its closure.* Chen Ge looked up at the piping and concluded, *The classrooms on the first and second floor showed obvious signs of usage, but the classrooms on the third floor seem to have been abandoned even before the closure.*

The tables and chairs were piled on top of each other, and there was not one piece of chalk left on the lectern. Some of the classrooms even had locks on them.

*Ghost haunting? Murder? Hidden security concern?*

There could be many different reasons for the sealing of the place, and Chen Ge could not pinpoint which one it was. He exited the classroom and headed up the fourth floor.

When he took the first step, Chen Ge turned back to see whether the wooden chair was following him or not.

It wasn't.

When he reached the landing between the third and fourth floor, there was a rope tied across the two banisters of the stair that blocked his way. There was a wooden board hanging on it. Similar to the one at the front door, it said 'NO ENTRY'.

Naturally, Chen Ge was not deterred by the wooden sign. He picked it up and put it to the side before bending down to scurry under the rope.

As he reached the fourth floor, Chen Ge noticed with his first glance that a faded room sign was hanging on the door of the room right opposite from him.

*The dance studio!*

After such a long search at the Activities Center, he had finally located the venue where the red dancing shoes had the highest chance of appearing. The layout of the fourth floor was different from the other floors in the sense that instead of individual classroom, the walls had been knocked out to form a large studio.

After tearing down the seals and prying open the lock, Chen Ge pushed open the door to the dance studio that had been left unused for many years. The place appeared to have been forgotten by time; things seemed to be how they were several years ago.

The slick floor was filled with a thin coat of dust, and the room was suffused with a weird smell. The closest description Chen Ge had for the smell was heavy deodorant that had gone off after being trapped in an enclosed room for years.

Chen Ge walked into the studio, sticking close to the wall. The studio was at a professional level; the wooden floor was waxed to accommodate the dance practice, and the walls were equipped with acoustic boards and panels to prevent the noise from disturbing the other classrooms.

*This is the first time I've seen such a large dance studio.*

Chen Ge used his camera to zoom in on the various angles of the room. The walls were mounted with bars that one usually saw in ballet classes. The bars' height was adjustable, and underneath them were a row of low seats that students could use for rest.

On the other end of the room were six floor-length mirrors that were perfectly joined together. Each mirror was about one meter wide and two meters tall.

*I'd almost forgotten that mirrors are a necessary fixture inside a dance studio.*

Looking at the row of mirrors, Chen Ge sucked in a cold breath. He then noticed, situated right at the middle of the mirrors, three wooden chairs.

*Three at once?*

Chen Ge bit on his lips before walking over to the chairs, his every action reflected in the mirror.

Facing his own reflection in the mirror amid an empty dance studio at midnight, Chen Ge felt increasingly unsettled.

Resisting the urge to break the mirrors, he toppled the three chairs to their sides, and like the chair he had found earlier, all of them had a girl's name written underneath them.

*Including the chair at the girl's dormitory, I've stumbled across five chairs already. If every single one of them represents a girl, then this means I'm dealing with the spirits of five girls. So, the question is, what has really happened to them?*

### **Chapter 56: She Who Cannot Be Named**

Chen Ge could not deduce the truth since there were plenty of clues still to be found. He returned the three chairs to how they had been before turning his head to look around the room. Due to the wall of mirrors, the dance studio felt larger and emptier than it was.

*The place is so clean. It has been probably cleaned more than once recently.*

There was no visible trash on the floor, and this was not good news for Chen Ge. *Someone has messed with the place already. Hopefully, the red dancing shoes haven't been tossed out.*

Chen Ge moved away from the wall of mirrors to the corner of the dance studio. The wall was covered with various certificates and accolade. There was also something that looked like a results list. After taking a closer look, Chen Ge found an anomaly. The first place of the list had been crossed off with a marker pen.

*A list without the winner?*

Chen Ge found all of the girls' names, including Qian Yujiao, on the list, but he could not find Zhang Ya.

He moved his gaze away, and one of the pictures on the wall grabbed his attention. It was a group photo of six individuals. Five of them were smiling brightly at the camera in a group hug while the sixth stood alone in the corner, quite a distance away from the rest. The photo had been manipulated to cut her out, if not for the snow-white dance shoes that peeked out from the corner, Chen Ge would have thought this was a group photo of five girls.

*These are all individual photos or group photos, why isn't there a photo of the whole class?*

Chen Ge aimed his phone at the wall and snapped a photo. Then, moving forward along the wall, he soon stopped before a room without a sign. Compelled by curiosity, he pushed the door open and walked into it.

The small room was equipped with a desk, a dresser, and a single bed.

*This appears to be the office of the teacher, but why is there a bed? The teacher needed to work the night shift?*

Chen Ge ransacked the room in the hope of locating the red dancing shoes. Unfortunately, the dresser was empty, and the drawers of the desk were filled with nothing but photocopies of winning certificates.

*Looks like the dance students here were all very talented, since they won so many prizes. Chen Ge picked up a few random pieces to look at, and one of them had the name of Qian Yujiao's group printed on it. Swan Lake Citywide Ballet Group Competition Champion. This means that they were qualified to join the state-wide competition.*

This certificate was not pasted on the wall outside, and most curiously, the winning group was supposed to have six names, but the last name had once again been crossed off.

*It's the same as the result list.*

Chen Ge wandered around the room for a little while longer before leaving it empty-handed. Chen Ge's heart skipped a beat when he pulled the door open. The three chairs had moved from their original position to a spot closer to the door that he had just exited.

*It has started again!*

Chen Ge told himself to just ignore those chairs. He rushed to look for other clues. If he could not come up with any clues for the next three minutes, he had decided to leave the Activities Center. Using his phone as a light source, Chen Ge walked to the deepest edge of the dance studio before he found the door that said the girl's dressing room.

*According to rumors, the girl's bathroom and dressing room are where the Ying energy is the most concentrated at any school. I'll need to be extra careful.*

He pushed the door slowly open. The dressing room was lined on both sides by steel lockers, and a long wooden chair sat in the middle.

*So, this is what a girl's dressing room looks like.*

This was the first time Chen Ge had entered such a place. He left the door half closed and walked into the room to pull open one of the lockers. A girl's school uniform was placed on the top level of the iron shelf. The design was different from other public school; it was more exquisite and prettier.

*The skirt barely reaches my knees, isn't that a bit too short?*

Chen Ge searched through the uniform's pockets and found nothing. He looked down the shelf and spotted a pair of white dancing shoes.

*The color is not right, not the ones I'm looking for.*

After closing the locker room, Chen Ge realized there was a small card pasted above the lock; it had the girl's name written on it. *Now, this should make my life easier.*

Using his phone, he examined the names on the lockers, but after one round, he still had not found Zhang Ya's name. However, he did find a solitary locker at the corner, isolated from the rest without a marking or a name.



*The owner of this locker seems to have been ostracized by the rest.* Chen Ge opened the door, and other than a dirtied ballet dress that sat on the top level of the shelf, there was nothing else.

*No name and ostracized, who could this locker belong to?* Chen Ge already had the answer inside his heart. He took out the dress and realized there were five candy boxes that had gone sour hidden underneath the dress.

*What are these for? Presents?* Chen Ge placed the ballet dress on the wooden chair and picked up the candy boxes. Every box had been hand-wrapped, and each one of them had a girl's name written on top. Every name was different, but the handwriting was similar, so they probably came from the same person.

*These candy boxes were most likely the presents that she prepared.*

When Chen Ge picked up the last box, he noticed a picture that was placed at the bottom. The picture was the complete version of the picture that was stuck on the wall outside. On the back of it was written, "Congratulations to Room 414 for winning the qualifications to enter the state-wide competition." The front showed six girls.

Five of them were happily celebrating on the right side on the picture while the sixth girl was standing about half a palm away from the rest. The girl had a tall figure, about 1.7 meters, and she looked like the main character of Swan Lake, graceful, pure, gentle, and beautiful. Even in the same picture, her supernatural grace put her apart from the rest.

"Could this be Zhang Ya?" muttered Chen Ge. He really could not reconcile the girl in the picture with the cruel and vicious Red Specter.

It was a pure accident that Chen Ge mentioned Zhang Ya's name, but when he did so, the lockers in the girl's dressing room started to creak and rattle—it sounded like they were overloaded and were about to burst. On top of that, Chen Ge could hear an insistent banging noise coming from outside the door, like someone was trying to get in.

"Who is it?"

After shoving the picture inside his pocket, Chen Ge turned towards the half-closed door as his grip on the mallet tightened. He looked through the opening and saw that the three wooden chairs had formed a barricade at the entrance.

"You really think I don't have the guts to smash you all into pieces?" Chen Ge's back was drenched in cold sweat, but he did keep his word as he walked toward the chairs with the mallet in hand. There was no other exit from the girl's dressing room; if he didn't clear a way out for himself, things would only get worse for him.

Chen Ge's eyes wandered outwards as he tried to plan his escape route. However, his legs froze when his eyes landed on the wall of mirrors in the dance studio.

The mirrors were reflecting the situation in the dance studio. The only difference was... there were three girls sitting on the three chairs.

## **Chapter 57: She Has Arrived**

Teetering bodies, dirtied school uniforms, pale faces, and moving mouths like they were trying to say something. The three girls' faces were frozen in fear and terror, and their bodies seemed to have grown out of the wooden chairs.

As his gaze alternated between the mirrors and the entrance of the girl's dressing room, a chill crept over Chen Ge's heart. Just not too long ago, he had tipped the chair over and observed them closely.

*Could that be considered my first intimate contact with a female?*

He shivered involuntarily, and his footsteps that headed toward the door hastened. As he wandered closer to the exit, the three chairs shuffled incrementally forward, and the lockers in the dressing room rattled slightly.

After he mentioned Zhang Ya's name, things seemed to have changed inside the dance studio. The name appeared to be a taboo here.

*The mirrors can only reflect what is in the dance studio. Perhaps there's something even worse in the dressing room—I need to leave, pronto!*

As if confirming his thought, the steel doors of the lockers started to creak like something was trying to escape from them. Holding the mallet in his hand, Chen Ge raced toward the door. With a running start, Chen Ge used his legs to kick the chairs that blocked his way. As he tried to rush out, he felt something pull on his shoulders.

He turned to look at the mirror, and in the reflection, two slender and pale arms could be seen hanging off his shoulders. Without a second thought, Chen Ge turned and started his assault!

Bang!

The mallet landed on the back of the chair, causing a crack to appear on the chair. The scream of a woman reverberated in his ears. In the mirror, he could see the female student on the chair glare fiendishly at his back while her arms encircled themselves tightly around his shoulders like she was trying to press him onto the seat of the chair.

*What is the purpose of her doing this? Could this be some kind of evil musical chairs game where my soul will be eternally trapped inside the chair if I sit on it?*

The force on his shoulders gradually increased as pairs of pale arms latched themselves onto him, trying to pull him back into the girl's dressing room. To make matters worse, Chen Ge could hear shuffling from the outside corridor, and several seconds later, another wooden chair appeared at the entrance of the dance studio.

*My luck is always used at the worst possible moment. It chooses a time like this to make me popular with the girls!*

Chen Ge was at his limit. Instead of running away, he shifted to attack mode. With one hand on the chair's back, he used his other hand to swing the mallet around, laying waste to the chairs that surrounded him!

When his mallet formed the first crack on the chair, Chen Ge had noticed that the expression of the female student shifted from pleading to venomous resentment. Through the shift in expression, Chen Ge came up with the conclusion that the chairs should be their items of possession, similar to how Xiaoxiao's family attached themselves to the ragdolls.

*Demolishing the items of attachment won't destroy them, but at least it'll be able to injure them.*

The force on him intensified. A newbie who had not experienced this before would probably have ended up as a willing lamb for this group of girls by now. Unfortunately, their opponent was Chen Ge. This proprietor of a Haunted House had just spent a night at a haunted apartment with a serial killer. Chen Ge still knew fear, but after multiple incidents, his resistance to fear had been trained. Even when he was in fear or shock, he could still manage to make the correct decision, and his grip on the mallet didn't waver.

Bang!

Chen Ge smashed the chair and gripped the ends of the chair to swing at another chair. The image reflected in the mirror was a bit hard to describe in words, but Chen Ge did not have time to deal with that anymore.

He used about ten seconds to destroy one of the chairs. Just as he turned to aim his wrath at the second chair, he felt something grip his neck. Turning his head to the mirror, he saw a pale hand choking his throat. His opponent seemed to have given up the thought of pressing him onto the chair and decided to kill him instead.

This shift in situation did not slow Chen Ge down; instead, it only made him more vicious as he gripped the chairs and smashed them at the wall. As the chairs cracked, the force around his neck lightened. When all three chairs were nothing but splinters, the chokehold around his neck finally disappeared.

"Leaving these things behind benefits no one. Later, I'll burn all of you to help you seek closure." Chen Ge leaned against the mirror and tried to catch his breath. There were visible strangle marks around his neck.

*The fighting must have created tons of commotion. This will definitely attract the attention of the person who is following me. I'll need to leave as soon as possible. Anyway, the red dancing shoes don't seem to be here.*

This place was definitely haunted, so Chen Ge didn't want to stay at the dance studio anymore. The sound of the rattling of the lockers inside the girl's dressing room intensified, and that was not something that could be caused by a draft. Other than that, there were many other curious happenings like the sudden deepening in the colors of the walls and floor as well as the weird 'ping, ping' noises from the corridor that had gotten far more frequent.

Just as Chen Ge prepared to leave, he almost tripped from someone pulling on his lower calf.

Chen Ge turned to look at the mirror and saw the three female students were pulling on his leg, their fingernails almost pushing into Chen Ge's skin.

Seeing this, Chen Ge also grew desperate. He smacked his mallet down on the wooden splinters, but no matter how hard he smashed, the girls did not release their grips on his calf.

The weird noise in the corridor was getting closer, and the vengeful faces that were pulling on Chen Ge started to laugh maniacally. A heavy cloth seemed to fall over the dance studio because the light from his phone started to twist as the heavy stench that Chen Ge had caught a hint of earlier started to suffuse the air.

*There's a scarier presence hiding at this school?*

Chen Ge was spooked by the thought in his mind. He dared to come to this school so late at night mainly because he assumed Zhang Ya was the scariest presence this school had to offer. He was there to do a favor for Zhang Ya, so she had no reason to harm him.

*This is bad.*

Something seemed to have reached the door of the dance studio, and the stink in the air intensified.

The three girls on the floor were glaring at Chen Ge with fierce and sinister expressions. Chen Ge's back was leaning against the mirror. He reached into his pocket, and his fingertip had just touched the doll when the weird noise at the door retreated with a speed that was faster than it was when it arrived. Then, the stink in the air slowly vanished.

*What happened? It feels like the thing outside the door was scared.*

All the weird noises disappeared instantly, and Chen Ge could only hear his heartbeat then. The light twisted at a greater degree than before, and the temperature in the room seemed to have dropped further.

*What is happening?*

The pulling on his calf had also disappeared. Chen Ge lowered his head and saw the three female students were hiding as far away as they could and looking at the space behind him with desperation in their eyes.

*Behind me?*

Chen Ge turned his head awkwardly around to face the tall mirror. The image reflected back at him was not his own but a woman in a blood-red school uniform looking down at him.

## **Chapter 58: Red Dancing Shoes**

Chen Ge was only half a finger away from the mirror, so he got a much better view than he would have liked. The elegant school uniform was dripping with fresh blood that caused it to stick to her body. Her face was hidden behind her hair, and the overly pale skin that was exposed looked scary.

The cold light from the phone screen twisted, and Chen Ge could feel his limbs becoming frozen. He used every ounce of energy in his body to stabilize his lips before he could utter the girl's name.

"Zhang Ya?"

As if hearing Chen Ge's voice, the girl slowly raised her head. The curtain of black hair parted to the side, and an unblemished face appeared in his view. However, the mirror started to mist when her head was only raised halfway. She took a step forward, and she disappeared from the mirror.

"Where did she go?"

Chen Ge stared at the mirror, and something even more curious happened. Cast from the phone's light, his shadow slowly stood up to stand behind him.

Chen Ge could see that the shadow was about 1.7 meters tall. As the dripping sound of something like blood entered his ears, the shadow started to gain color. The bloodied uniform stuck to its body, and it was all red.

Chen Ge stood where he was and did not dare move. The chilliness from his back had climbed up his spine to his brain. Right then, the red shadow took another step back to lean against his back!

Standing back to back, Chen Ge's body froze. Even as he gasped for air, the sensation that he was running out of air would not go away.

*The specter has stuck to my back?*

Standing back to back was sometimes quite scary because you could not know who was standing behind you.

Something cold seemed to reach for his fingers. Chen Ge did not dare turn to take a look. His frozen fingers slowly opened to allow the phone to slide to the floor. The light flickered twice before it switched off suddenly.

Surrounded by darkness, the coldness behind his back continued to spread. Chen Ge couldn't even imagine the things that were happening to him. *2 am, inside an abandoned school's dance studio, facing a tall mirror, standing back to back with a Red Specter... in a way, I guess one could call this romance.*

Various thoughts crossed Chen Ge's mind. Something was holding his hand, and it made him feel increasingly cold. The hair of the girl behind him was moving as it entwined itself with Chen Ge's hair.

*What is she planning to do? My mission here is to find the red dancing shoes. I'll fail the mission if I am unable to do that before dawn.*

However, Chen Ge's body was frozen in place, and the only thing he could do was stare at the mirror before him. He did not notice it initially, but several seconds later, he realized with a start that fuzzy shadows were forming inside the mirror. He widened his eyes as the shadows started to become clearer.

*Wait, aren't these the girls who are trapped inside the chairs?*

Inside the mirror, five girls in clean uniforms entered the dance studio. Their outfits were completely different from what Chen Ge had seen earlier, so he suspected that the images he saw now were reflecting scenes that happened years ago.

The five girls walked toward the mirror, laughing among themselves. Soon after they entered the studio, Zhang Ya showed up. Even though they were wearing the same uniform, Zhang Ya carried herself in a different way than the rest of the girls.

She was carrying a bag in her hands. Chen Ge had seen this bag before inside the girl's dressing room; it was holding the five candy boxes.

Zhang Ya seemed to be in quite a good mood. She walked into the dressing room with hurried steps, and several minutes later, all six girls came out wearing their ballet dresses.

The situation had not changed much. The five girls were in their little group while Zhang Ya tailed behind alone.

Not long after they started their training, the dance studio's door was pushed open. A female teacher walked in holding the Swan Lake winning certificate in her hand. She was talking animatedly with the girls, probably encouraging and congratulating them.

That day was probably not a normal school day because Chen Ge didn't see any other students. The six of them were likely there to do intensive training to prepare for the state-wide competition.

The female teacher left after half an hour. After making sure the teacher had left, the five girls stopped practicing and started playing on their phones and chatting while lying on the floor. The only one practicing was Zhang Ya.

Then, one of the girls said something while pointing at Zhang Ya. The rest of the girls laughed with the exception of Zhang Ya. However, she did not seem to mind it too much. After practicing for a little while longer, she stopped to rest. Then she turned to walk into the dressing room and came out with the bag of candy boxes.

Zhang Ya passed them to the girls, but as one of them reached for it, she was stopped by one of the other girls, who was as tall as Zhang Ya. She said many things while pointing her finger assertively at Zhang Ya. She then ran into the dressing room and came out with a school bag. She pulled out several love letters from it. From the name, Chen Ge knew they were all addressed to Zhang Ya.

This could not really be considered an argument because it was totally one-sided, dominated by the other girl who was weirdly agitated.

Zhang Ya's candy boxes were thus rejected. She placed them back into the bag and left. Chen Ge thought that was the end, but not long after that, the door to the dance studio was pushed open again. The few girls were startled. Thinking it was the teacher, they quickly climbed up from the floor and started to 'practice'.

A fuzzy shadow of a male walked in. He was about 1.8 meters tall, slouching, and very large in size.

The man said something to the girls, and only two said something in return to him. Chen Ge was confused by his identity.

The girls soon returned to their practice, and the man entered the office. Later, he opened the office door and waved for Zhang Ya to come to him. Zhang Ya appeared like she did not know or even trust the man. She walked toward the office with hesitation and stood at the door but did not go in.

The mirror could not reflect what was inside the office. However, about eight seconds later, the scene on the mirror darkened as Zhang Ya ran out of the office. Holding his arm, the man chased after her while cursing all the way.

All five girls in the dance studio saw this, but all of them sat where they were. None of them were willing to go to Zhang Ya's aid. Soon, Zhang Ya was cornered at a space that was nowhere close to the door. She screamed loudly for help, but it was not answered. The girls acted like they did not even hear her.

The man said many unsavory things as he closed in on Zhang Ya. Zhang Ya's hands had reached the edge of the window behind her—there was only one exit left.

Looking at the scene that played itself on the mirror, Chen Ge was suddenly reminded of the lines that appeared on the black phone when he won the love letter.

Her eyes exposed, cheeks white as ash, the moment she fell off the building, she became the taboo of the school. Red dancing shoes and blood-dyed uniform, even her name became something that was only uttered in frantic whispers.

The man studied the empty window closely but did not rush down to save Zhang Ya. Instead, he took several steps back to stop beside the five girls, who were in complete shock.

### **Chapter 59: Together Forever**

The dance studio was extremely quiet. In the mirror, the man was the first to recover. He stood before the five girls and started to glare threateningly at them. One of the girls started to weep, so the man yanked her up from the floor and pointed his finger at her face while his lips moved. The girls shook her head vehemently.

Then, the girl who was as tall as Zhang Ya stood up. She walked over to the man and started to help him persuade the other girls. From how she carried herself, she seemed to know the man and shared a more than friendly relationship. Perhaps it was even she who planned for the man to appear just after the female teacher left.

With the girl's persuasion and the man's threat, the other girls finally nodded. After a few more minutes of discussion, the man was the first to leave. The five girls then entered the dressing room to change, and they all left soon after.

The mirror returned to normal, but the atmosphere in the dance studio grew tense. Chen Ge could feel the chill coming from his back; it felt like he was carrying a frozen dead body.

*That's all?*

The mirror only recorded what had happened in the dance studio but did not go into what happened next. Chen Ge believed there had to be more than that. After falling from the fourth floor, as long as it wasn't head first, Zhang Ya still had a chance of being rescued.

*Red Specter harbors deep resentment... Maybe the fatty snuffed out Zhang Ya's last breath because he was afraid of being exposed? The water system of the activities center has been renewed so perhaps the fatty used the system to deal with the body?*

As the thought cropped up in his mind, Chen Ge rejected it. Zhang Ya was lost inside the school, so the police had to have been involved. Furthermore, cleaning up a body was not as simple as depicted on those crime dramas. Sometimes, the more one tried to hide, the more obvious it became.

Chen Ge was curious what happened next, but the mirror had stopped moving. *Perhaps I should give Inspector Lee a call. This is a murder, and Western Jiujiang's Private Academy is within their jurisdiction, so he must have some kind of record.*

Chen Ge's idea was not bad, but when he planned to pick up his phone, a scream came from behind him. Zhang Ya's hair started to twine up his shoulders like snakes curling themselves around his neck and chest, tying them close together.

"I'm not leaving; I just want to help you!" Chen Ge argued before his breath was choked out of him. However, the black hair continued to constrict like a boa constrictor suffocating its prey. Perhaps from Zhang Ya's perspective, this was the only way the two of them could be together—this was true love.

Chen Ge had escaped from the wolf's den to enter the tiger's cave. Now he understood why Zhang Ya's love letter was a curse; this lady did not like living man, and the more she loved a man, the greater her desire to kill him.

Standing back to back, his limbs too weak to even resist, all Chen Ge could do was to argue his case. "I will help you call the police and have law enforcement provide justice by bringing all who have harmed you to the judgement of law!"

The words felt ineffective even to Chen Ge's ears. Zhang Ya's situation was unique. Unlike the family of four at Ping An Apartments, she did not need him for revenge. Those who had harmed her were trapped inside chairs already! And Chen Ge believed she had plenty to do with that.

The kind and graceful Zhang Ya had been completely corrupted into a mad specter. Chen Ge did not even dare to imagine the type of disaster that had befallen the five girls before they were trapped inside the chairs.

Chen Ge had given up—this was how he was going to go—but as he prepared for death, the black hair stopped attacking.

"What's wrong? There are still people who haven't received their just punishment?" he uttered quickly, to stress that he would help Zhang Ya capture all those who had harmed her. The black hair started to release as if Zhang Ya was also considering the options. All Chen Ge could do then was wait.

The dark dance studio returned to silence. Ten seconds later, an unexpected thing happened. While he was dancing on the line of life and death, the door to the dance studio was suddenly pushed open, and a lanky guy poked his head in to look around.

When he saw Chen Ge, a cruel, excited grin lit up his face, and the hand with the peony tattoo pulled out a fruit knife from his back pocket. However, coincidentally, when Chen Ge saw the man, he also smiled, his expression saying—"You're finally here!"

"Surprise to see me? You've left too many clues; the bricks on the outer walls had your footsteps, and the window on the first floor of this building had fresh dirt and grass stuck to it. After entering the building, your footprints are practically everywhere. You're too careless, and now, you shall pay!"



The man standing at the door was naturally Zhang Peng. His eyes were bloodshot, and his mental state was unusually animated. He held the fruit knife in his usable arm. However, to Chen Ge's surprise, after Zhang Peng said that long speech, as he took the first step into the dance studio, the expression on his face shifted drastically. Earlier, he had been vicious, but now, he retreated worriedly, his eyes glowing with caution and resentment.

*The mirror monster has taken control of his body?*

Before Chen Ge could react, Zhang Peng started to race down the stairs. He seemed to have spotted something scary. His limbs were twisted in unnatural angles as he ran, which gave him the impression of a puppet being pulled along by his master.

The black hair around Chen Ge disappeared, along with the girl behind him. All he could see was a red flash across the mirror; a chase seemed to have begun. The chilliness from his back gradually dissipated, and life returned to Chen Ge's frozen limbs. He picked up his phone and backpack before racing toward the stairs, his speed no less than Zhang Peng's.

*This Bloody Heart Mission will have to be put on the backburner for now. If I truly earn Zhang Ya's affection, my life in the future will be a little too exciting for me to handle.*

Chen Ge dashed out of the Activities Centre. He took a glance at the surrounding dark forest and used his phone to call Inspector Lee.

The phone rang once before it was picked up, and Inspector Lee's voice came through. "Xiao Chen? Did you run into Zhang Peng?"

"Western Jiujiang's Private Academy! Zhang Peng is here! Other than that, I have something important to tell you," Chen Ge said through heavy breaths as he raced toward the school gate.

"Fu Jun, Da Yong, contact the investigation team immediately." Inspector Lee didn't hang up. After he gave his orders, he returned his attention to Chen Ge. "What is this other thing you want to talk about?"

"I discovered another murder case at Western Jiujiang's Private Academy!"

## **Chapter 60: You've Found Another Murder Case?**

"You've found yet another murder case?" Inspector Lee's tone on the other end of the phone was puzzled to say the least.

"Four years ago, a female student by the name of Zhang Ya jumped out of the building, but there is more to her death than suicide!" Chen Ge said firmly.

"Wait a minute, let me go look at the files first. If the victim's family had asked for an autopsy, we should have the record of it somewhere." Inspector Lee didn't hang up as he turned on the lights of the records room to search for the files. He finally found something five minutes later. "Wait, why does Western Jiujiang's Private Academy sound so familiar? Xiao Chen, get out of that school now!"

"I'm already heading for the gate, what's wrong?"

“That school is just weird; I can’t explain it to you in just a few sentences, but I can give you a number. Six people committed suicide within the span of two weeks at that school, and their deaths were all very weird.”

The sound of paper flipping could be heard through the phone as Inspector Lee looked through the files.

“That sounds about right! That number fits what I’m thinking.” The school gate was within Chen Ge’s view—he could exit the place soon.

“Fits what you’re thinking? What exactly is happening over there?”

“Don’t mind that, check whether the name of the first suicide victim is Zhang Ya or not.” Chen Ge was in a hurry to confirm his suspicion.

Inspector Lee double-checked the records before replying. “Indeed, the name is Zhang Ya, but she did die from a fall. It is a suicide because the mortician did not find any other wounds on her body. On the day of the discovery, the police did visit the crime scene for investigation. The girl fell from the fourth floor’s dance studio; the window she fell from was undamaged, and the soundproof foam around it wasn’t showed no signs of cleaning. So, from this, we confirmed Zhang Ya jumped out of the building without outside influence.”

“Without outside influence? Inspector Lee, have you considered that she was forced to do so? If she didn’t jump, she would have been raped!” Chen Ge relayed the scenes he had seen in the mirror.

“We considered that as well, and there are testimonies from Zhang Ya’s roommates in the records. All five girls said that they didn’t know anything. Zhang Ya jumped off the building after their class was over, so Zhang Ya was inside the studio alone. According to their testimonies, Zhang Ya had always suffered from high stress, was prone to solitude, and was perhaps even mentally unstable. To confirm their testimonies, the police at the time even verified their accounts with the girls from the class, and everyone agreed.”

“Zhang Ya is definitely not the person they described; they all banded together to frame her!” Zhang Ya was feeling indignant on Zhang Ya’s behalf. He did not expect that the whole class would gang up on Zhang Ya; the girl didn’t even do anything wrong.

“What kind of person Zhang Ya was, you and I will never know, but the evidence doesn’t lie.” Inspector Lee didn’t understand why Chen Ge was so agitated. “In any case, get out of that school as soon as you can. We’re sending our men to come fetch you.”

“They were all lying! Take a closer look at Zhang Ya’s time of death, it should be before the class was over! They lied on the time of death, so those five girls were accomplices!” The volume of Chen Ge’s voice inadvertently increased.

“That’s where you’re wrong. Zhang Ya’s time of death was between 6 pm and 8 pm. Those five girls left school at around 5.30 pm, their usual time of departure.” Inspector Lee didn’t know how happened to Chen Ge at the school, so he stood from an outsider’s perspective to analyze the situation.

“Impossible!”

“It is indeed possible. The mortician conducted a detailed analysis based on livor mortis and rigor mortis. Zhang Ya’s time of death is indeed between 6 pm and 8 pm. The cause of death was a broken spine. Other than that, there were wounds to her skull, calcaneus, and hipbone, all common injuries suffered by suicide victims that died from falling.”

Chen Ge had no way to retort. He stopped where he was. “If Zhang Ya did jump off the building before the five girls left, this means that she didn’t die instantly after the fall. However, due to the broken bones that incapacitated her body, she could only lie in a pool of her own blood as she waited for death to come, tortured by pain and heartache until she truly died around 6 to 8 pm.”

“Your hypothetical scenario is possible, but you have forgotten one thing. If the girl still had a breath in her after she fell off the building, why wouldn’t the five girls who were there save her? Even if they had their own reasons not to save her, other people at the school would have discovered her.”

“It was a holiday, and the school was deserted other than the six of them who were at school to practice for the upcoming state-wide competition. Their teacher had already left beforehand, and even if there were guards or someone of the sort, isn’t it possible that they were sent away by people with ill intentions?” Chen Ge posed a differing opinion.

“I’m not going to argue that with you; after all, it is a moot point arguing whether Zhang Ya died from suicide or murder. You believe those five girls were the real murderers in Zhang Ya’s death and collaborated with each other to provide false testimony, but two weeks after that, these five girls died one after another. The real murderers you assumed are now dead, so how are we supposed to investigate this case?” Inspector Lee was more worried about Chen Ge’s safety.

“Inspector Lee, I never said that these five girls are the murderers; they are merely accomplices! The real murderer who caused Zhang Ya’s death is a fatty that is 1.8 meters tall with a slouched back!”

“That’s quite a detailed description, mind telling me how you came to that conclusion? Four years ago, the security at Western Jiujiang’s Private Academy hadn’t been completed yet, and all the witnesses are now dead. But you’re telling me there’s a real murderer on the run... how do you expect me to believe you?”

Inspector Lee had worked overtime for the past few days already thanks to the Ping An Apartments’ case. It was why he was still at the station even at 2 am. Lethargy could be heard laced in his words.

Chen Ge could discern the suspicion in Inspector Lee’s voice. “We can start by investigating the people who are related to Western Jiujiang’s Private Academy from four years ago; we have to find this person! He was at the crime scene!”

“Chen Ge, starting a police investigation is not a game. Do you know how difficult it is to reopen a case that was closed four years ago? Even if you can convince me, it’ll be pointless if you cannot convince my superiors. What we need is actual proof—not suspicion, not speculation.”

“Everything that I’ve said is the truth.”

“That is according to you.” Inspector Lee had started rearranging the files to put them back where they were. “Do you mind telling me why you are suddenly so interested in this case? You don’t give me the impression of a young man who is filled with a sense of justice.”

*Why am I so insistent?* Chen Ge was startled by this sudden question from Inspector Lee. He was reminded of the aid that Zhang Ya had lent him when he was trapped inside the wooden hut as well as the chilling loneliness coming from his back when Zhang Ya was standing behind him inside the dance studio.

“It’s nothing. In the current circumstances, the only person who can help her and come to her aid is me.” Chen Ge looked at the black phone.

“I still don’t understand what you’re saying.” Inspector Lee continued after a long pause. “But holding up justice is the job of law enforcement. Since you’ve brought up the suspicion, after the case on Ping An Apartments is wrapped up, I’ll personally help you look into this.”

“Thank you, Uncle San Bao!” Chen Ge sighed in relief. “Capturing the real murderer, I suppose is giving Zhang Ya some kind of release. With regards to this godforsaken place, I really don’t want to return again.”

He hung up the phone and turned to look at Western Jiujiang’s Private Academy one last time.

To his shock, Red Specter Zhang Ya was just standing behind him!

There were about three meters between them. Fresh blood dripping on her school uniform, Zhang Ya looked at Chen Ge with her head tilted. This time, she didn’t move closer, and her expression was a bit weird.