

Horrors 601

Chapter 601: He Wants to Push Open the Door in Western Jiujiang

“A shadowless man?” If it was a living person, he should have had a shadow, unless he was not a living human, or he was someone’s shadow out on a ride. Chen Ge decided to confirm it with the old lady again. “Granny, are you sure you’re not mistaken?”

“Yes.” In the old lady’s memory, that person looked just like Chen Ge. She stared at Chen Ge, and a weird feeling overwhelmed her. “That day, he was just standing outside the door. I asked him what he was doing, but he didn’t reply. He carried on mumbling someone’s name on his lips.”

“Someone’s name? Can you remember what name it was?” To clarify the suspicion in the old lady’s mind, Chen Ge took out his phone and shone the light on himself to show that he still had his shadow with him. “Granny, I come with a shadow. Look. The person you saw merely had the same face as I do.”

“My memory eludes me. I’ll call you to tell you if I remember it.” The old lady exchanged phone numbers with Chen Ge.

“Granny, other than this, can you remember anything else about this person? How long did he stand at the door? After he left, were there any changes at this building?” Chen Ge was afraid that the shadow might have left a trap in the building. After all, his adversary had the whole of Eastern Jiujiang roped into his plot, so Chen Ge could not be too careful.

“After Jia Ming ran out, the person outside the door disappeared. After he left, I checked the building and couldn’t find anything missing. Strangely enough, I was left with this feeling that something was amiss, but I couldn’t tell what it was. It was as if something important had been taken away by that man.” The old lady sighed. With a curved back, she shuffled around the room. “I looked around the building, but nothing was missing. Yet, that feeling wouldn’t go away, and I wouldn’t say it wasn’t responsible for my lack of sleep.”

“You feel like something is missing?”

“I’ve told you everything I need to. When you leave, remember to close the door for me.” The conversation with Chen Ge seemed to remind the old lady of her sad memory, so she shuffled out, unwilling to continue the conversation anymore. Chen Ge was about to leave with the old lady when he felt a tug on his shirt.

Turning back to look, he saw five crooked fingers holding the edge of his shirt, and then the woman crawled out from underneath the coffee table.

“I’m not going to harm her...” Chen Ge’s eyes scanned the woman and the boy; he was suddenly reminded of something. After he entered this building, he had only encountered the woman and the child, but he did not come across the old lady’s son. “A family of three got into a car accident. The wife and the son remained in this building, so there is no reason for the husband not to be here as well.”

He related that to what the old lady had said earlier. After the shadow left, she had felt like she was missing something important. Could the spirit of her son have been kidnapped by the shadow?

Chen Ge intended to find out. After a moment's silence, he asked, "A few years back, you should have encountered an evil spirit that looked like me. Can you tell me everything you know about him?"

The two ghosts stayed away from him. Their eyes studied Chen Ge closely, and they were thinking about something.

"If I don't kill him, one day, I'll be killed by him. If you were once harmed by him, then we should be friends because we have the same enemy." Chen Ge leaned down and actively reached out his hands to hold the woman's bloody and deformed fingers. "I can help you, and I'm not just staying that for fun."

When the female ghost sensed Chen Ge's intention to shake hands with her, she immediately retreated. Seconds later, the boy ran into the bedroom and dragged out a broken schoolbag from under the bed. He took out a pen and paper and placed them on the coffee table. The woman's hair curled around the pen, and crooked words started to form on the paper.

"He's alive, not completely dead. The shadow is just a part of him. My husband told us to leave, and he stayed back to help us escape. He ate my husband—he's growing stronger." Chen Ge read the words on the paper.

"What does it mean by he's alive? The shadow's physical form is still alive? He's a living human? But how could a person consume a ghost?" Chen Ge had no idea what the woman meant by dead, but he believed that it had a different definition from the medical understanding of dead. However, even so, the information was already shocking enough for Chen Ge. "The shadow's real form couldn't be defined as a ghost, or rather, he's different from a normal ghost. This enemy sure is a confusing one."

When he battled with the ghost stories society, even though the members were highly mysterious, at least Chen Ge could confirm that they were all living humans. The society was made up of living humans, and the ghosts were technically only tools. Yet, the feeling that this mastermind in Eastern Jiujiang gave Chen Ge was completely different. Even now, he could not tell whether the culprit was a ghost or a man. After reading the woman's message, that confusion had only deepened.

"Is that all?" Chen Ge put down the paper, and the woman controlled the pen to start writing again. "When he ate my husband, he said, with each death, the resentment in his heart would grow stronger, and each consumption would lead him closer to that man. One day, he would return to Western Jiujiang to personally push open that door."

The written words had little semblance of logic, but it caused Chen Ge's hair to rise. These sentences revealed plenty of information, especially the last sentence, where the shadow said that he wanted to personally open the door in Western Jiujiang. Chen Ge greatly suspected that the door in question was none other than the one inside the toilet at the Haunted House.

The business at the Haunted House was on the rise, but once the door in the toilet was opened, things would change overnight. Every effort that he had made after obtaining the black phone would go to waste.

"Just who is this person?" The door at the Haunted House was Chen Ge's bottom line. He would fight to the death with whoever dared target that door. There was no room for negotiation.

The woman had no idea what Chen Ge was thinking. She continued to write on the paper. "There are ten locales in Eastern Jiujiang that form the background for the scariest ghost stories. The man has consumed the ghosts of five of these locales, and he was injured for the first time at White Dragon Cave Tunnel. The shadow will only show up at night, and he hates light and children's crying."

After writing all that, the woman looked at Chen Ge and picked up the boy before they both disappeared.

"The people in Eastern Jiujiang are generally superstitious, and I've heard about these ten ghost stories before, but I had no idea only five of them remained. Then again, the first time that the shadow hit a roadblock was at the White Dragon Cave Tunnel, and last night, Jia Ming just so happened to be found fainted at the mouth of the tunnel. Could it have been on purpose that he fainted there to lure me into the tunnel to investigate and use my hand to deal with his enemy?" The shadow was an extremely cunning person in Chen Ge's mind, so he had to consider everything from the worst possible angle.

"But I can use his weakness of hating light and children's crying somehow, I'm sure." Chen Ge shoved the paper on the table into his pocket. When he prepared to leave, he remembered that he had forgotten to ask whether the mother and son wished to come with him or not, to move to somewhere more comfortable.

After some thought, Chen Ge took out another piece of paper from the boy's bag, and he used the pen used by the woman earlier to leave this message. "If you run into any trouble, feel free to come find me at New Century Park's Haunted House in Western Jiujiang. Please give it some thought. The boy is not young, and I have many professional teachers and children his age at my Haunted House. You should think about his future."

He placed the paper in the most conspicuous spot and turned to leave the room. His steps were soft, a result of his many Trial Missions. When he reached the first floor, the door to the old lady's room suddenly opened.

"Granny? How can I help you?"

The old lady looked at Chen Ge. Her lips moved, but eventually, she shook her head and returned to her room.

Chen Ge stood at the door, and he could guess that the old lady already knew that her family had not left, but neither party was willing to be open about it.

"They also wouldn't wish for you to stay in this lonely world alone."

Leaving the building, Chen Ge hailed a cab back to theme park and a new day began.

Chapter 602: Ghost Realm

Chen Ge arrived at New Century Park at around 8:40 am. The park was still not yet open, but there were already many waiting visitors at the entrance. Seeing the visitors' excited faces as they chatted among themselves, Chen Ge revealed a large smile. Knowing that his work was able to bring the visitors joy and help them chase away their unhappiness, it made him feel very accomplished.

Amid the crowd, Chen Ge spotted some familiar faces, and they often pulled the topic back to the Haunted House.

The return of many visitors proved that Chen Ge's decision to delineate the scary scenarios into different categories was a correct one. Those who had challenged a less scary scenario would definitely be interested in the scarier ones. With the 'encouragement' from their friends, the chance for them to return would be high.

The small app designed by Director Luo for the Haunted House was a runaway success, too. Not only the visitors of the Haunted House, even many supernatural fans and alternative culture researchers on the internet also downloaded it. The app looked like it was on its way to become the biggest social community for Haunted House lovers in the nation.

The daily download number and active user number was still climbing, and Chen Ge heard Director Luo had been approached by many advertisers for cooperation, but he had rejected all of them. Director Luo had a clear vision. The Haunted House was the park's main attraction, and the app was its support. Everything was to uphold and support the service of the Haunted House, so he would never bring in a negative user experience for the sake of advertising money.

"Boss, where did you go this time?" Xu Wan and Xiao Gu stood next to the gates, one on the left, the other on the right, like a pair of door guardians.

"It's too complicated to explain. Just pay attention to the news and you'll see." Chen Ge's answer was short and to the point.

"Is it the crime and legal channel?" Even though Xiao Gu had not worked at the Haunted House for long, he had gotten used to his boss' 'hobbies'. Now, he shared his room with some roommates, and his roommates were confused by his demeanor because most teenagers their age would spend time playing games or watching videos, but Gu Feiyu would plant himself in front of the television, watching the local crime news. His roommates could not understand Xiao Gu like how a normal person could not understand one's feeling from having to find one's own boss appear on the local crime news again and again.

After putting on the make-up for Xiao Gu and Xu Wan, the theme park officially opened for the day. Uncle Xu and the workers helped maintain the order while Chen Ge finally got the chance to rest. Seeing the visitors move in and out, Chen Ge had a sudden realization that he was living quite a comfortable life.

"The Haunted House depends on the unknown and novelty to attract the visitors. Only by continually unlocking new scenarios will I be able to maintain its livelihood."

Chen Ge took out the phone and looked through the missions. The deadline for the Ghost of the Afterlife was coming to an end, and Chen Ge would not give up on this four-star scenario.

"I can't drag this out any further. I need to go to White Dragon Cave Tunnel tonight to have a chat with the woman caught in the car accident. Since she has gotten into an altercation with the shadow before, it shouldn't be too difficult to communicate with her." Chen Ge put down the black phone and turned to glance at his own phone. "Today's weather forecast is not bad, but there is supposed to be heavy rain tomorrow night. I should make use of that opportunity to take the last bus on the Route 104 out for a

spin. Even if I don't run into the woman in the raincoat, I have nothing to lose if I can find some passengers."

He found a pen and paper to make some notes. "Tonight, I'll go to White Dragon Cave Tunnel to finish the three-star mission, and tomorrow, I'll go find the woman in the raincoat and purchase a batch of strong lights. Then the night after tomorrow, with all the preparation done, I'll bring all of my employees to Li Wan City to challenge that 3.5-star mission."

Xiao Bu had once warned Chen Ge that he would die if he stepped into Li Wan City again. He had no idea what he would face in Li Wan City, but there would be nothing wrong if he went fully prepared.

"Xiao Chen, what are you so busy with?" Uncle Xu's voice came from the Haunted House door. Due to his cowardice, he had never once stepped into Chen Ge's Haunted House before.

"Uncle Xu, how can I help you?"

"Director Luo is looking for you."

After sending the visitors into the scenario, Chen Ge put away the paper and raced out of the Haunted House. Not far away, Director Luo was chatting with a group of visitors in a casual outfit. Their conversation was lively, interspersed by laughter. The few visitors probably did not expect this middle-aged man who looked so friendly and kind to be the leader of the entire theme park.

"Director Luo, were you looking for me?" Chen Ge waited for their conversation to come to a lull before barging in.

"I have something important to discuss with you." Director Luo led Chen Ge to a more deserted spot, and the smile on his face slowly disappeared. "Do you still remember that I once accompanied a man to visit theme park and the man even asked about your Haunted House?"

"I think I do. I can't remember his name, but he said that he wanted to invest in our theme park, to help us upgrade our amenities and expand the theme park's grounds." Chen Ge was reminded of the man, and he had also once seen the man's face on the phone of an employee from the futuristic theme park.

"His real name is Bai Qin, a very powerful realtor. He only has one passion in life, and that is money. For money, he is willing to do anything, even things that err on the wrong side of the law." Director Luo spoke slowly. "We were once schoolmates, so I know him well. The man will stop at nothing for nothing. When he was young, he married the daughter of a rich man and even changed his surname, so nowadays, few people know of his real name."

"Are we going to cooperate with him?"

"New Century Park's amenities are too behind, and without an upgrade, it'll be very hard for us to grab the visitors away from the futuristic theme park." Director Luo had his own concern. "There are currently few places in Jiujiang that can provide quality entertainment, and people are starved for choices, so they can only come here. After the futuristic theme park opens, it will definitely bring a huge impact to us."

“They will mostly rely on high-tech attractions and the overlapping of virtual and physical entertainment. It is completely different from the direction of our theme park. As long as we can survive the first wave, I’m sure the visitors will eventually return.”

“You’ve underestimated their ambition.” Director Luo was the center of the theme park, so he rarely shared his concerns with others lest the morale was shaken. “I’ve done some investigation, and they’re not only planning to come up with the latest non-virtual attractions; they’re even planning to copy the idea behind your Haunted House. For that, they have introduced a new project recently. It’s called Ghost Realm.”

“Ghost Realm?”

“It’s a combination of both physical and virtual setting with the aid of actors. They’ve poured in plenty of money to build the biggest and most unique Haunted House in the nation.” Director Luo glanced at Chen Ge. “Bai Qin allowed me to look at some of the insider information. The futuristic theme park plans to turn their own Haunted House into a real-life horror game that the visitors can enter and interact with. They have come up with four main plots and more than ten subplots. Based on the choices that you’ve made, the final result will be different each time.”

“That sounds marvelous, even I am interested in visiting it.” Chen Ge purely wanted to exchange information and initiate friendly competition. Perhaps they would be able to learn from one another, just like his previous visit to Tian Teng Medical Hospital.

Chapter 603: End of the Tunnel

“You sure are relaxed.” Seeing the glow in Chen Ge’s eyes and the young man’s excitement in trying the new attraction out, Director Luo felt quite speechless. “Your Haunted House is currently our theme park’s main attraction. In other words, your Haunted House sets us apart from other theme parks, but once the visitors find a replacement, we will lose our competitive edge.”

“Then what should we do now?”

“Do everything they plan to do before they do it. That way, when they officially open for business, the visitors will have the impression that they’re merely copying us.”

The older the ginger, the spicier it was. Director Luo’s suggestion was incredibly tempting to Chen Ge, but it stopped there. “Increasing the visitors’ interactivity with the scenario is doable, but to combine every scenario to create a horror game experience is too difficult.”

Chen Ge knew about his own situation. All of the scary scenarios had everything to do with the black phone, and he was only responsible for unlocking them.

“There’s no need for us to change the existing scenarios. I’m merely giving you a general direction to follow.” Director Luo offered his thoughts. “The underground parking lot is limited in terms of space. Have you considered expanding to the surface and connecting both the surface and underground? It’ll be more dimensional, and you can come up with unique settings like stairs and elevators.”

Chen Ge's final goal was to create a theme park with the theme of terror and horror, so eventually, he would have to expand beyond the confines of the underground parking lot.

"I can help you solve the issue of budget and manpower; you only need to focus on interior design." Director Luo had great confidence in Chen Ge. He took out his phone and opened a document. There were several designs in it. "Your Haunted House is on the northwestern side of the park. We plan to break down the fencing on the northwestern side and expand in that direction; that is just perfect for you to connect to your Haunted House."

By designing intertwining corridors inside the Haunted House and overlapping the spaces, even without using a large space, one could create the sensation of a maze; Chen Ge was an expert in this area. "The expansion of theme park will be based around my Haunted House?"

"The other attractions will be updated as well so that our theme park will not appear to be so lagging behind, while the expansion of your Haunted House will be to increase our theme park's competitiveness, to make our advantage stand out even more." Director Luo's mind was very sharp. "I've already found the builders and the Haunted House's design team, but there's one thing that you need to be careful with. Even though I've personally approved this batch of workers, their relationship with Bai Qin is not bad. So, when you come up with the design, you'd better be careful."

Bai Qin was willing to invest when theme park needed it the most, so theoretically, Chen Ge should be thankful of the man's help, but in reality, both Chen Ge and Director Luo thought that this man had an ulterior motive.

"I can use the builders, but I don't think I'll have any use for the design team. This is the core of a Haunted House, and I will never allow any outsiders to meddle in it." Chen Ge denied the offer directly.

"But can you do all of it alone? We're planning to make use of all the land on the northeastern side. The workload will be massive."

"I have my own team. They're my parent's friends. After my parents disappeared, I kept in contact with them. If I ask, I'm sure they're willing to come and help." Chen Ge's parents did not have any trustworthy friends, or none that Chen Ge knew of—he was merely coming up with a valid identity for his team of Ghosts and Ghouls.

"That would be perfect. If there's a chance, bring them to come meet me. I will help you talk to them about the salary." Director Luo worried about this character, Bai Qin. The man was a pure businessperson. Since he was able to sell the inside information about the futuristic park, it was only logical to expect him to sell the information about New Century Park as well. For someone who placed profit above everything else, there was nothing in the world that could not be sold for a price.

"They need to work in the day and can only come at night. It's okay, I can negotiate with them myself." Chen Ge had his own plan. Construction on the surface was different from construction underground, so he had to come up with a building process somehow, or at least make a show of it.

"Okay, then I'll leave the interior building and design to your team. Do you have any requests about the exterior appearance?" Director Luo looked through his phone. "Currently, we have three proposals. The first is to make it look like a hospital, second is an abandoned school, and third is a haunted residential area."

Chen Ge thought all three proposals were quite brilliant, but considering the four-star Trial Mission provided by the black phone, he first excluded the haunted residential area. There were already plenty of school-related scenarios in the underground parking lot, so after some consideration, Chen Ge chose the first proposal, which was to make the appearance look like a hospital.

“Director Luo, when you’re building the set, remember to keep everything sealed, and ensure that you couldn’t see anything from outside. If a Haunted House loses its sense of mystery, then the feeling of anticipation will greatly decrease.” Chen Ge scrolled through the design papers that Director Luo provided. “I’ll leave the construction of the exterior to you, and the sooner it is built, the better. When you’re done, I’ll find my parent’s friends to help me with the interior design and construction.”

“It shouldn’t take too long since we’re technically just building an empty case.” Director Luo put the phone away. “After the place expands, manpower will be a problem. If you have any problems, please come to me, and I will try my best to help.”

“Okay.” After sending Director Luo away, Chen Ge looked at the northeastern side of theme park. “It is a good idea to expand the Haunted House to the surface. At least this will lay the foundation for the horror theme park in the future.”

Returning to the Haunted House, the visitors were still bustling. Chen Ge summoned Ol’ Zhou and Duan Yue to come help while he went to the staff breakroom to rest.

“The futuristic theme park plans to create a horror game that the visitors can interact with, and I shouldn’t be lagging behind. For now, most of the employees here only know how to scare people—their function is too singular. I need more workers like Ol’ Zhou and Duan Yue who can play different roles. If there’s a chance, I need to conduct some training for all of my employees.” Chen Ge wanted to vary the elements of his Haunted House, to increase its challenge and playability, and he needed his employees’ cooperation for that to happen.

“Much still remains to be done, but there is a short-cut. I only need to find the type of ghost that fits the type of actor that I want.”

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At 5 pm, Chen Ge exited the staffroom. There had been no accidents throughout the day, and he was getting more satisfied with Ol’ Zhou and Duan Yue’s performance. At 6:30 pm, Chen Ge sent the last batch of visitors away. He let Xu Wan and Xiao Gu, who had been busy for the day, go home while he stayed back to clean.

“My biological clock is now completely inverse. I’ll feel so spirited at night.”

With the aid from the ghosts, the cleaning was soon completed. Chen Ge changed and grabbed his backpack to prepare for the Trial Mission that he was attempting that night.

“The shadow once failed at White Dragon Cave Tunnel, so this three-star mission is probably different from the ones I’ve faced.” Chen Ge shoved the recorder, comic, and everything that he could carry inside the backpack. “I can’t be too careless, but I shouldn’t be too afraid since we have the same enemy, so we should be able to talk over this nicely.”

After preparing everything, Chen Ge took out the black phone and found the page that he needed.

“Are you going to accept the three-star Trial Mission—End of the Tunnel?”

“Yes.”

“Mission accepted!

“End of the Tunnel (3-star Trial Mission): No one knows what is at the end of the tunnel, but all that go in never come out.

“Mission Requirement: Reach the deepest part of White Dragon Cave Tunnel before midnight.

“Mission Hint: Close both of your eyes, and perhaps you might see the real world.”

Chapter 604: Unwanted Guest

“Enter the deepest part of the tunnel before midnight. So, does this mean I only need to keep walking into the tunnel?” The mission requirement was a bit too vague for Chen Ge to understand. If he failed any trial mission, the punishment was that the corresponding scenario would be locked away forever, so Chen Ge did not dare take any risk. “The only thing I can do is walk into the tunnel as deep as I can.”

Chen Ge had already done his research about White Dragon Cave Tunnel before. Everything online had something to do with the woman related to the car accident. In other words, people only knew that the female ghost would ask for a life. Chen Ge could not find any information on other spirits like the strange breathing sound, the shadow of the spider, or the like on the internet.

“I should go there before the sun completely sets.” Due to the multiple car accidents in White Dragon Cave Tunnel, many experts had been brought in to update the layout, but strangely enough, no matter how many times it was rebuilt, once it was allowed for traffic, accidents would still happen and in the end. The only solution was to seal the entire tunnel.

The internet said that the tunnel had been given three big rebuilds and numerous small rebuilds. Someone even suggested mixing dog blood and black donkey hoofs into the walls and floor of the tunnel, but that did not prove to be of actual use. The inside of the tunnel was complicated, and Chen Ge did not dare act too carelessly.

Carrying his backpack, after locking up the Haunted House, Chen Ge hurried to leave New Century Park and hailed a cab to get to White Dragon Cave Tunnel. With his previous experience, Chen Ge did not tell the driver directly that he was going to White Dragon Cave but told the driver to send him to a fork near the tunnel.

The original purpose of the White Dragon Cave Tunnel was to connect Jiujiang and Xin Hai City. Jiujiang was surrounded by lakes and a mountain range, so to liven up its economy, a route was necessary. Unfortunately, accidents kept happening on this route.

Some of the older Jiujiang locals said that Jiujiang’s lakes formed a Feng Shui depiction of Nine Dragons playing with the globe, so cutting a road through the mountains of Jiujiang caused the good Feng Shui energy to leak, and it was little wonder that strange accidents kept happening at that road. No one bought this story at the beginning, but the string of strange accidents started to change minds. The people on top eventually changed their mind and sealed White Dragon Cave Tunnel.

The night covered Jiujiang. As the taxi drove toward Eastern Jiujiang, fewer cars appeared on the road, and the number of skyscrapers also dwindled. The houses that showed up by the roads also appeared worn and old.

Cutting through the old part of town, the driver was a friendly person. He kept chatting with Chen Ge along the way. White Dragon Cave Tunnel was on the edge of the countryside, and before even reaching the destination, cars completely stopped appearing on the road.

On the narrow road, the streetlights were placed very far from each other. Perhaps because this road was rarely used, the government did not care much about its maintenance. Trash littered the road, and many of the streetlights were defective.

“I hate driving to Eastern Jiujiang. The locals hate outsiders and have a habit of dropping their trash on the road. It’s fine for an experienced driver like myself, but the newbies always get into accidents when they come here,” the driver grumbled casually.

“That trash might not be the doing of the locals.” Chen Ge had come to the edge of Eastern Jiujiang many times already, and every time, the feeling that he got from this place was that living humans should stay away.

The closer the taxi got to White Dragon Cave Tunnel, the more deserted the geography became. The surroundings were mostly trees and scrubs interspersed occasionally by the views of buildings and light.

“You can drop me here.” Chen Ge did not want to harm the taxi driver. He decided to walk the rest of the way. After all, it was still early.

“Are you sure? This place is in the middle of nowhere, and there’s not even a human shadow around here.” The driver said that, but he was already accepting the fare from Chen Ge. He handed the paper with the QR code for his WeChat wallet to Chen Ge.

Chen Ge knew that the man was only being polite. After he paid and prepared to get out from the car, the driver suddenly said, “Why is there a woman there?”

Following the driver’s gaze, Chen Ge noticed a woman squatting before an old residential home on the left side of the road. She had only one shoe on, and one side of her dress was torn open. She squatted in front of the house with her head lowered like she was searching for something.

The driver rolled down the window and poked his head out. The woman looked frail and weak. Her arms were thin like twigs. The yellow and white striped dress was wrinkly like someone had rustled it roughly.

“Hey! Why are you here alone?” The driver did not ask for Chen Ge’s opinion and called out directly. The woman heard the driver and slowly raised her head. The curtain of black hair parted to reveal a pale face. She looked normal, but as they said, whiteness could cover up one hundred types of ugliness. There was a unique allure about her.

The woman did not speak but slowly stood up. Without a word, she strode toward the taxi. The side of her dress was torn, and the dress itself was covered in dust and dried leaves. There were wounds on her calves, but strangely enough, none of the wounds were bleeding.

“Is there something wrong with the girl’s brain?” When a normal person came across something like this, they would not instantly think of ghosts. The driver was one such normal person.

The car window was tapped consecutively. Without taking too long, the woman reached the side of the taxi. She used her palm and tapped on the window with an expressionless face.

If this had happened to a normal person, they would have been unsettled, but the driver’s reaction was a bit strange. He smiled at the woman outside the woman and continued as if talking to himself. “It’s alright, don’t be afraid, I’ll drive you home.”

Then, he opened the door, and the woman easily crawled into the passenger seat.

“What’s happening?” Chen Ge was still seated in the back, and he turned to look to the front.

The woman lowered her head once she got into the car. She did not say a word, but the driver could not stop talking. It appeared as if he was talking to the air, and it was just weird overall.

“You’re married?”

“There shouldn’t be any tolerance for domestic violence. If it’s happened once, it’ll happen again. The b*stard shouldn’t be forgiven.”

“I can understand why you’re running away from home. You poor thing.”

“Are you planning to escape to your parent’s home? It’s okay. I understand. No problem.”

Chen Ge could not allow harm to come to an innocent. He took out the ballpoint pen from his backpack and left a message on the back of the paper with the QR code—The woman is not who she seems.

Then, he passed the paper back to the driver. “Boss, your code is not working! See if it’s because something is wrong with the paper.”

“Huh? It should work fine.” The driver looked at the paper for a long time but simply refused to turn it around. “How about you use any e-wallet?”

Then he took out another piece of paper and handed it to Chen Ge.

Without reaching to grab the paper, Chen Ge glanced at the passenger seat. “You plan to drive this girl home? Where is her home exactly? Perhaps we’re going the same direction. In that case, I’ll pay for both of our fares.”

The driver saw the logic in his argument. “She lives in the nearby village. It’s further in, but that place is even more deserted. I don’t think you’re heading there, are you?”

“Wow, this is such a coincidence, that is exactly where I’m heading. Just keep on driving then, you can drop me off with the girl.” Chen Ge opened his backpack and reached his hand into it.

Chapter 605: What Are You Looking For?

The driver did not agree instantly. He secretly turned around to glance at Chen Ge with suspicion in his eyes. From his perspective, Chen Ge’s insistence to leave with an injured girl belied an ulterior motive.

Yet, Chen Ge looked like quite a trustworthy person—he was sunny, kind, and polite. However, the large backpack that he carried unsettled the driver, and now, he noticed the faded scent of blood drifting out from it.

Have I ferried a criminal? The driver hesitated before starting the engine. “Okay.”

The taxi continued to move, and the driver still talked to the air while both of the passengers in the car ignored him. Chen Ge kept his eyes on the woman in the passenger seat. He used Yin Yang Vision to scan the girl, but he could not see anything particularly strange about her. The woman seemed to know that Chen Ge was watching her, and in the rear-view mirror, the edge of her lips started to curl upward. The smile combined with her stark white skin made the hair on Chen Ge’s arms crawl.

Just keep on smiling, we’ll see if you can still retain the smile when we reach the destination, Chen Ge grumbled internally. He had no idea where the girl was going, but since he had the ‘good luck’ of encountering her, he was going to come along for her final journey.

The streetlights dimmed, and the trees by the road shook, swayed by the wind. The gnarled branches cast their shadows on the ground, creating the perfect atmosphere for a horror-filled night.

The driver continued talking to himself. From Chen Ge’s perspective, it seemed like he was in a scintillating conversation with the girl, but in reality, the girl had not spoken a word since she got into the car. In this strange atmosphere, the taxi continued to drive several hundred meters before the driver suddenly stepped on the brake. The car halted, and due to inertia, Chen Ge’s head almost flew into the back of the girl’s seat.

With one hand inside the backpack and the other holding the door, Chen Ge asked, “What’s happening?”

If there was any danger, he would directly smash the lock and jump out.

“There’s a child in the road.” The driver was shivering with cold sweat as he pointed at the road. On the left bend of the road, there was a boy holding a black plastic bag. He looked just shy of nine years old, and he was wearing a faded white T-shirt. His face was one of anxiety and fear like he had been given a big fright by the incoming taxi.

“Why is there a child out here in the middle of nowhere?” The driver opened the car window and was about to poke his head out when Chen Ge at the back suddenly said, “I advise you to not stop your car here.”

“Are you afraid this might be a scam?” The driver nodded. “I read about things like this on the news before. An adult purposely had a child play by the road, and when a car passed, the child would be frightened. The adult would then jump out to demand for compensation because the child was frightened for real, so even if there were surveillance cameras, it was hard to argue for one’s innocence. This has happened many times on the news already.”

“Those kinds of scams want your money, but I’m afraid, the people that you met will want your life,” Chen Ge said under his breath. He was wondering if the driver had the attribute of attracting ghost because he had already gotten into so many accidents before they even reached White Dragon Cave

Tunnel. Just in case, Chen Ge used Yin Yang Vision to study the driver, and the result was that he was just a normal man.

“If the problem is not with the driver, then it should be me.” Chen Ge remembered that Jia Ming had been controlled by the shadow fainted outside the tunnel, and no one knew what the shadow did that night inside the tunnel. “Could this be a part of the shadow’s trap?”

When Chen Ge was thinking, he heard a tap on the window next to him. He turned to look, and a child’s face materialized next to him. Through the car window, a smile appeared on the child’s pale face. He leaned his body forward like he was looking into the car.

“Are you looking for something?” Chen Ge also smiled in response. With his hand on the hammer’s handle, he slowly nudged it to the opening. This was a curious scene. The ghost outside the car had a vicious intention while the person inside the car was harboring his own motive as well.

The boy used his small hand to tap repeatedly on the window, leaving small handprints on it. The child’s palm was covered with red dirt, and he quickly smudged the clean car window. The boy’s pale face flitted in and out of the mess of handprints, and it looked quite scary, but the thing that worried the driver the most was the passenger in his backseat. He seemed to be holding something in his bag while smiling at the boy outside the window—the two appeared to be engaged in some kind of game.

“Er...” The driver wanted to lighten the mood, but after he opened his lips, he did not know what to say.

“Just keep driving and ignore this weird child.”

“That’s not so good, right?” The driver hesitated. It was not that he was that kind-hearted, but he worried that by starting the car, it would topple the boy, and if he was run over by the wheels, then it would only make things worse. Probably hearing Chen Ge’s words, the boy started to hit harder, and more handprints appeared on the window.

“Sure, keep knocking. If you dare, break this glass.” Chen Ge seemed to get into a competition with the boy. He smiled at the boy with a face filled with provocation.

“Just what the hell is happening?” The driver was speechless. He complained internally, *This is not even your car. If he really breaks the glass, are you going to pay me for the repairs?*

He coughed and asked the woman at the passenger seat, “Do you know this child? Could he have come from the nearby village as well?”

When he ran into a ghost, he asked the opinion of another ghost. Chen Ge seemed to see his own shadow on this driver, but he did not say anything, and the expression on his face did not change. The woman did not say a word, but the driver kept nodding like he was slowly being persuaded.

He waved at the boy outside the car, and after some hesitation, he opened the door. “Come in. Since you’re both going to the same place, I’ll give you a lift.”

The backdoor opened, and the boy jumped into the car with the black plastic bag. He sat next to Chen Ge and continued the staring match.

“What’s your name? Can you remember your parent’s phone number?” The driver started the engine and asked the boy some basic questions. He waited for a long while, but there was no response. The

driver turned back to look and saw that the boy was caught in an intense stare with Chen Ge. He had no idea what they were doing.

“F*ck it, I’m not going to care anymore.” The driver gave up. He placed his phone on the dashboard, someplace that he could reach easily. He tapped into the system of walkie-talkie shared by cab drivers. “Is anyone in Eastern Jiujiang? There’s plenty of work to do here tonight.”

He was actually quite panicky inside and wanted to find a normal person to chat with.

Soon, an uncle replied on the walkie-talkie, “You still dare to go to Eastern Jiujiang? Most of the drivers that have gone there over the past month came back with an injury, and I heard some of them were found fainted in their driver’s seat.”

The uncle appeared to be the driver’s close friend, and they often joked with each other. “Stop trying to trick me, you know how easily scared I am.”

“Who’s tricking you? I’m being serious. It’s not safe in Eastern Jiujiang. Just take a look at the news yourself.”

“What news? You know I’m driving.”

“I’m just giving you a warning. In fact, the police found...” The communication was abruptly cut off before the uncle could finish his sentence.

“Found what?” The driver tapped the walkie-talkie. “Why has it broken at a time like this?”

He had not felt so scared initially, but after hearing what the uncle had to say, the driver was feeling much less grounded. He slowed down the car and took out his phone to do a quick search.

There had indeed been quite a few cases in Eastern Jiujiang lately. He glanced through them, and his eyes were soon attracted to one of the articles. A child ran away from his adopted father’s home, and his body was found on Eastern Jiujiang’s Lin Jiang Road.

“Wait, I’m currently driving on Lin Jiang Road, aren’t I?” The driver clicked open the article, and the picture of the victim made him feel so familiar. “This boy...”

His body froze. The driver slowly inched his head upward and sneaked a glance at the boy sitting at the back through the rear-view mirror.

Chen Ge was squeezed next to the boy, and he leaned closer toward the black plastic bag that the boy was holding onto so tightly. “What is in the bag of yours? I noticed you were searching for something before you got in the car.”

The boy smiled at Chen Ge and said after a while, “I’ve almost found everything. I’m just missing a hand.”

Chapter 606: The Third One

After the boy said that, the temperature in the car dropped to below freezing down, and the driver’s face turned ashen.

“Just missing one hand?” The driver thought he had heard wrong. He had a hard time believing that he would hear something like that come out from the lips of a young boy. His pupils shuddered, and he glanced toward his phone. The article did not detail the boy’s cause of death—it only mentioned in passing that the boy had been brutally murdered. Due to one comment by the boy, the atmosphere in the car changed.

The driver’s hands that gripped the steering wheel were slick with sweat. The woman next to him was silent, and the boy on the backseat gripped the black plastic bag tightly, his face plastered with a smile that did not match his young age.

Of the few ‘people’ in the car, only Chen Ge could be considered relatively normal. He seemed like the only one to have everything under control. He nudged closer toward the boy. His voice was soft and warm, but what he said made the driver squeeze out a fresh bout of cold sweat.

“You’re only missing one hand? Does that mean the other parts that you’ve found are all inside this plastic bag?” Chen Ge pointed at the bulging bag. “Do you mind letting me take a look inside it? And if you need help, I can help you look for the rest after we get out of the car.”

“There’s no need.” Seeing Chen Ge turn his target toward the black bag, the smile on the boy’s face slowly disappeared.

“Actually, we’re not so different, you and I. We’re both looking for something.” Chen Ge picked up his own backpack, but his bag was much bigger than the child’s.

“You’re also in search of something?” The boy could taste the light trace of blood coming from inside Chen Ge’s bag, and he realized that things were getting dangerous. This was different from what he had anticipated before he got into the car. “What are you looking for?”

“Actually, the thing I’m looking for is in this car with me. When the time is right, I’ll shove all of them into my bag.”

Chen Ge played the role of a strange uncle scaring a child perfectly. It was a common joke for adults to play pranks on innocent kids, but the boy next to him did not show a trace of a smile at all. This was because the boy knew that Chen Ge was being serious.

“All of them?” Different from the boy, the driver overheard Chen Ge and almost mistook the gas pedal for brake, almost driving into a tree. He thought what Chen Ge meant by that was that he was going to murder everyone in the taxi and then cram all of their body parts inside his backpack.

He was unable to follow the conversation of his passengers at the backseat, so the only passenger who could give the driver some semblance of security was the young woman next to him. From his point of view, the young woman was soft and pitiable, and if an accident happened, he decided to take the girl and run. That way, at least they would be able to be on the lookout for one another.

The situation is becoming worse. All I can do now is help as many people as I can while maintaining my own personal safety! The driver came to that decision in his mind. He sneaked a glance at the young woman next to him. The young woman seemed to notice the problem as well, and she laid her fingers lightly on the driver’s knee.

Chen Ge had no idea of the role that he had been cast in the driver's mind. All of his focus was placed on the boy next to him. Since they had met by chance, he figured that they should be friends, and he planned on inviting all of these 'people' to come to his Haunted House as guests.

The taxi continued to move for another stretch of the road, and it soon came to a T-junction. One of the roads would lead them away from Jiujiang to another district while the other road would take them to White Dragon Cave Tunnel.

"Which turn shall I take to get to your home?" the gentlemanly driver asked the young woman. The lady slowly raised her head and extended her finger to point at the direction of the White Dragon Cave Tunnel.

"White Dragon Cave Tunnel?" Jiujiang locals knew about the stories that surrounded this particular tunnel. The place was technically a stretch of cursed public road. Car accidents happened there as often as rain, and various ghost stories and urban legends were made with this place as its setting and origin.

The driver's face blanched. He forced himself to calm down. He turned to ask the boy who was holding the bag, "Child, can you still remember which direction your home is?"

The boy was not happy to have been placed next to Chen Ge. He nudged his chin in the direction of White Dragon Cave Tunnel expressionlessly.

"Your home is also that way? Looks like you two are indeed from the same village." The driver tried to find a logical excuse to explain the whole situation, to try to comfort himself. He forced a smile as he turned to Chen Ge. "What about you?"

"That is where I'm going as well, but I advise you to stop and turn back now. Let the two of them out of the car and drive me back to the spot where you picked up this young lady." Chen Ge wanted to protect the driver. If he got out of the car with the woman and the boy and allowed the driver to go back alone, then on the way back, the man might run into other accident. To ensure the man's safety, Chen Ge volunteered to accompany him.

However, the driver did not see it that way. He sensed danger from Chen Ge, and he thought that Chen Ge was trying to get him alone so that he could strike. The more the driver thought about it, the more afraid he became. Chen Ge was out alone at night to take a cab, going to the middle of nowhere with him a backpack that had the smell of blood drifting out of it. One could write ten horror stories about what Chen Ge was doing. He believed that he knew what Chen Ge was planning, and there was no way that he was going to stay with Chen Ge alone inside the car.

"I don't think so. Since you're all going the same way, I should just drive all of you there." The driver sent a coordinate triangulation message on their company's chat group, but the connection was so bad that he saw the message loading for a long time before failing. He slowed the car down and typed two more messages, but they too failed to send due to poor coverage.

His car was filled with people, but strangely enough, the driver did not feel safe at all. He thought about calling the police, but he was afraid that might provoke his passengers, causing them to do something irrational.

Just as the driver was thinking about what to do, an old man appeared in the middle of the road. He trundled down the slope, moving toward the T-junction where the taxi sat idle. He carried a medicine basket on his back as he shuffled along with his limp. He appeared to be a herb gatherer. Most of Eastern Jiujiang was dominated by mountains and lakes, so the economy was not so good. However, also because of that, nature had been left mostly untouched, and many valuable herbs that could not be found elsewhere grew vibrantly.

Different from the plants cultivated in labs and farms, wild herbs were valued much higher, and the older generation that remained around the nearby villages depended on harvesting them to keep their lives afloat.

The old man appeared to have tripped on his way back from the mountain. His right leg was limping, and his shirt had many tears made by branches and bushes. There was even a blood stain on the edge of his pants.

When he walked past the taxi, he glanced absent-mindedly into the car, but when he did, his eyes slowly grew big, and he suddenly picked up his pace, shuffling away from the scene. Seeing the reaction on the old man's face, the driver only got even more panicked.

He rolled down the car window, wanting to ask the old man for help, but when he turned to look out the window, the limping old man had already disappeared.

"How did he manage to move so fast with a limp?" The driver shivered involuntarily when he felt a cold caress on the back of his hand. He turned to notice the woman had moved her hand to place on the back of his arm.

"What's wrong?"

The woman pointed in the direction of White Dragon Cave Tunnel, signaling for him to start moving.

When the driver made the turn, Chen Ge also spoke up. "Did someone pass the car earlier? Who were you talking to?"

"There was an old gentleman with a limping leg. He carried a bamboo basket on his back, didn't you see him? He even paused to look inside the taxi when he shuffled past it!" The driver could not stop the shrillness from entering his voice.

Chen Ge shook his head. There were only shaking tree limbs and their shadows outside the car. He did not see any old man.

Chapter 607: No Way Back

Ever since the shadow appeared at White Dragon Cave Tunnel, the strange factor of this area had been kicked up a notch. The young woman, the boy, and the old man that the driver had mentioned—before even entering the tunnel, Chen Ge had already met three 'people'.

"This place sure is crowded." Chen Ge did not ask for more information about the old man but sat quietly in the back. The taxi slowly moved down the road leading toward White Dragon Cave Tunnel.

The closer they got to the destination, the more unsettled the driver felt, but he was starved of options. At this point, there was nothing he could do but move forward.

The trees by the road swayed like souls crawling out from hell. The light dimmed because most of the streetlights leading to White Dragon Cave Tunnel were broken, and the local government did not care enough to fix the road that was covered with dried leaves and mud.

However, strangely enough, amid the mess of trash, there were trails of clear footprints—some big and some small, some barefooted and others with shoes. In any case, it was clear that they had been left behind by more than one person.

“There weren’t so many footprints when I was here last time.” Chen Ge observed closely. He realized that all of the footprints pointed toward White Dragon Cave Tunnel. “They’re all heading to the tunnel? What is attracting them inside the tunnel?”

Chen Ge had no idea what had happened to the tunnel, but he knew that after the shadow made his appearance here, the tunnel had become different from before. The car tires crushed the fallen leaves and branches, eliciting an eerie sound. With the headlights beaming, a large black outline appeared. All the lights would disappear when they hit that spot.

“White Dragon Cave!” The taboo of all the urban legends appeared before his eyes, and the driver’s eyelids could not stop twitching. His legs were shaking, and his body sent him messages that it was time to turn and run.

“We’re here.” The taxi stopped before the tunnel, but the passengers inside the car didn’t show any intention of getting out. “We’re already at White Dragon Cave Tunnel, so I think I’ll stop here.”

The driver felt like retreating; he had already been through enough strange events for one night.

“I don’t mind, but the key is dependent of the two of them.” Chen Ge leaned against the cushion and shifted his weight to a more comfortable position. It was still well before the mission time given by the black phone, so he was not in a hurry. Chen Ge was the only one who was more willing to negotiate—the same could not be said of the two other passengers.

The young woman slowly raised her eyes, and between the strands of tussled hair, the pair of eyes shone brilliantly red. She slid her fingers down the window, creating a sharp noise. It felt as if there was something inside the tunnel that was causing her to go berserk.

The condition of the boy was equally strange. He was still holding the black plastic bag, but his originally innocent-looking face was now twisted beyond recognition.

The closer they were to White Dragon Cave Tunnel, the more obvious the abnormalities they possessed. It was as if the resentment in their bodies was being drawn out, and they could not hold it in anymore. None of the three passengers looked like they were getting out of the car, and this caused the driver to panic. A deep frown was etched on his face, and he appeared as helpless as they came.

They say good things come to good people, but how come it’s the opposite for me? the driver grumbled internally. He stopped the car; White Dragon Cave Tunnel was the taboo location for all the taxi drivers in Jiujiang. No matter what, he was not driving into the tunnel.

Even sitting inside the car, he could feel the cold draft coming out from inside the tunnel. Rising his eyes to look, White Dragon Cave Tunnel was like the gaping maw of a beast, and everyone that walked into it would be consumed until even their bones could not be found.

“Why did you stop? You need to move forward! My house is just in front, keep driving!” the boy at the back demanded urgently.

“Your house is inside the tunnel?” When he heard that, the desire for the driver to stay away from the tunnel increased. The boy in the back looked similar to the victim from the news article. Earlier, he had even said that he was searching for his hand. If this was not a prank, then the real identity of this boy was worth pondering.

The driver realized the danger he was in, and he ignored the boy’s command and turned the car around. He planned to drive all the way to the police station—regardless of whether it was a ghost or human inside his car, he would pass on all of them to the police. That was a good idea, but once he started the engine, something went wrong.

He could hear the engine starting, but the car simply refused to move. He tried it multiple times, but in the end, he only caused the dashboard to break down. This time, the driver was genuinely panicking. The car had broken down in the middle of nowhere, and the scariest thing was that he had no idea how many people were ghosts inside his car.

“Don’t panic, the dashboard is acting up probably because you tried to start the engine too many times, and you short-circuited the battery somehow. It’s just a small problem.” At the most crucial moment, Chen Ge’s words gave the driver the security that he needed. Chen Ge’s voice was powerful and warm, and it helped the driver to slowly calm down.

“Okay, you stay in the car, I’ll go to take a look.” The driver placed his hand on the doorknob and was about to step out when there was a loud thud, like something heavy had landed on the roof of the car. The driver was frightened, and he instinctively pulled his hand back, but then something even stranger happened.

Without touching the steering wheel, the car started to move. And the direction it was heading? It was none other than White Dragon Cave Tunnel!

“I didn’t start the car, so why is it moving on its own? We have to jump out now!” The driver wanted to pull open the door, but when his hand landed on the handle, the loud thud came again. This time, the sound originated right in front of the driver. He could clearly see, after the sound disappeared, on the windshield right before the driver’s seat, there was a blood red handprint.

His eyes widening, the driver’s mind was drawing a blank. He had no idea how the red handprint appeared on the glass like magic. Before he could understand it, the sound appeared this time at the back of the car. Then the whole car shook, and more bloody handprints appeared on the car’s back window.

“What is happening?” This time, even Chen Ge was slightly apprehensive. Different from the driver, using his Yin Yang Vision, he could just about see that the car was currently surrounded by ‘people’, and each handprint represented a resentment-filled soul.

“Why are there so many dead spirits gathering at the mouth of the tunnel?” Sitting inside the car, Chen Ge flipped open the comic and activated the recorder. This caused the smell of blood inside the car to thicken.

More bloody handprints appeared, and they looked quite scary, filling up the windows. With them jostling and pushing, the car was slowly sent deeper into White Dragon Cave Tunnel.

The driver’s despairing cry for help was unable to stop the taxi from being engulfed by the darkness.

This happened too suddenly, and no one expected this transformation. When they recovered, the taxi was already deep inside the tunnel.

The tires felt like they had rolled over something because the car tipped slightly. More handprints continued to appear, and the spine-tingling rapping echoed in their ears.

Chapter 608: Listening to the Darkness

The light around them slowly disappeared. It felt as if the taxi was being pushed into the ocean. When the last shred of light vanished, it meant that the passengers inside the taxi were enveloped by darkness.

“Is... is someone there?” When the continuous rapping petered away, the driver slowly raised his head. His hands went searching for his mobile.

“Don’t move, lie down.” The voice was harsh, but the driver did not rebel against and moved to oblige. The one giving the order was Chen Ge. The sound of tapping had disappeared, but the spirits were still surrounding the taxi; they had not left.

“What do they want?” With Yin Yang Vision, Chen Ge could see things that the driver could not, and from his perspective, they were not in a good spot. Every inch of the taxi’s exterior was covered by bloody handprints, and the people that had left those handprints were surrounding the taxi. Each one of them had a strange facial expression, and their bodies were turned toward the same direction. Their lips moved up and down like fish, sucking in the strange air inside the tunnel.

About ten minutes later, a strange noise came from deep within the tunnel. It was hard to describe. It sounded like thousands of centipedes crawling on the wall, and at the same time, it sounded like a giant breathing, its breaths scraping the uneven tunnel walls.

After that sound appeared, the spirits around the taxi started to move toward the sound. Footprints echoed around them, but there was no living human in sight. The driver hid inside the car, hugging his head; he was well and truly frightened. It was too dark for him to see anything, but his ears kept picking up these strange audio cues. They rushed into his mind, and the driver felt like his brain was about to explode.

A light creak came from a part of the car. It sounded like the door was being eased open.

Without the light, no one knew what was happening. Half an hour later, when the sound had completely silenced and the tunnel became quiet again, the driver finally summoned his courage to go looking for his phone. Using the weak light from the screen, he looked around the inside of his car.

The doors had been left open, and there were no other passengers in the car. The taxi was empty with the driver remaining alone at the driver's seat.

"Where are all the people?" With people next to him, he would not be so afraid, but realizing that he was all alone, the driver started to panic. He activated the walkie-talkie, but all he could hear was static—there was no one talking. He tried to call his friends and colleagues on his phone, but strangely enough, no one was answering.

He was unable to keep his movement silent due to anxiety, and he called out on the verge of tears, "Please, is anyone there? Anyone will do, can someone answer me?"

"Stop yelling, shush." A ray of light appeared at the front of the car. The driver looked to the source, and it was a young man carrying a backpack standing there. The driver was familiar with the man's outline—he was the first passenger that he had picked up that night.

"Don't waste time and follow my orders. First, try and see if you can start the car or not." Chen Ge held the backpack with one hand and his expression was severe. The driver understood the gravity of the situation and did not pause to ask questions. He tried multiple times, but the engine was still not working.

"Get out of the car to inspect the engine. Quick, we don't have much time to waste." With the urging from Chen Ge, the driver crawled out from the car. The hair on his body stood on end once he noted the bloody prints that covered his vehicle. Opening the front lid, the driver leaned in to look. The internal compartment was ruined by the reams of black hair that curled around everything. He was unable to cut them loose without the aid of tools.

"Do you have any scissors?" the driver asked Chen Ge in a whisper.

"Will a hammer work?"

"Er, never mind then." The driver closed the lid and followed behind Chen Ge with a saddened frown. "It should be the hair that plugged up the pipes of the motor. I won't be able to fix it without the necessary tools."

"In that case, we'll abandon the car for now. Later, remember to stay close to me, and no matter what happens, do not wander too far away from me." Chen Ge turned on the flashlight function attached to his phone and started to walk down the road opposite in the direction that the spirits had gone.

"Did you see the two other passengers? How come you're the only one here?" After a brief hesitation, the driver finally asked that question.

"Even now, do you still think they are normal passengers? Those two have already moved deeper into the tunnel." Chen Ge was not going to waste time explaining these things to the driver. If not for the fact that he thought the driver was a kind-hearted person, he did not think that he would waste the time to lead the driver out and would have joined the 'crowd' earlier to head deeper into the tunnel. "This tunnel is seriously dangerous. I'll bring you out first and leave after ensuring you're safe."

"Thank you." The driver was genuinely appreciative of Chen Ge. Under that condition, having the company of a living human was something worth celebrating.

“If you want to thank me, make sure that you keep everything that you see tonight to yourself and don’t tell a third person after you leave this place.” Chen Ge kept his voice low, and it added an air of mystery to everything.

After hearing that, the driver nodded consecutively, promising to follow Chen Ge’s orders. The duo walked down the tunnel for three minutes, but they were no closer to the exit.

“This is not right.” Chen Ge stopped, standing in the middle of the tunnel. “It only took half a minute for the light to disappear after the taxi was hauled into the tunnel. At the time, the car was moving about as fast as we’re moving. In other words, we should only take one minute before we saw the exit, but we’ve been walking for longer than that, and there’s not a shred of light in sight.”

“You’re right! What’s going on?” Hearing Chen Ge’s analysis, the driver shivered out in cold sweat. “Perhaps we’ve gone in the wrong direction? Have we accidentally moved deeper into the tunnel?”

“The front of the car is facing the deeper part of the tunnel, so our direction cannot be wrong.”

“Then, why aren’t we out of this tunnel yet?”

“How am I supposed to know?” This was the first time that Chen Ge had encountered something like this. With one hand on the wall, he stealthily took out the black phone. “If only I could contact that Red Specter in the tunnel. Last time we met, we had quite a friendly talk, and it shouldn’t be too hard to ask her for a little favor.”

Chen Ge did not know the name of the Red Specter and did not know how to contact her. However, thinking about his previous experience there, Chen Ge had a brave idea surfacing in his mind.

He clicked open mission for the End of the Tunnel on the black phone and read the mission hint again. “Close your eyes, and you might see a different world.”

With the driver looking on with shock, Chen Ge shredded the sleeve of his shirt.

“What are you doing?”

Chen Ge ignored the driver. He folded the torn sleeve into a blindfold and tied it around his eyes.

“Brother, what are you doing? Can you please act a bit more normally?” The driver was frozen standing where he was. He could not understand Chen Ge’s action at all.

“Be quiet and follow me. If you’re really that afraid, feel free to close your eyes.” With his hand touching the wall, Chen Ge continued to move forward in this manner.

Chapter 609: Endless Repetitious Circular Tunnel

Voluntarily closing one’s eyes in the dark and scary tunnel, in a way, was a different method of viewing the world. However, the driver, who had not been briefed on Chen Ge’s intention, could not for the life of him understand what Chen Ge was doing. Was this a manifestation of the ostrich effect? By closing one’s eyes, it was easier to pretend that the monsters roaming the tunnel did not exist?

Even though he was filled with many questions, the driver followed behind Chen Ge honestly. After all, the man was his only hope. He could not imagine being abandoned in this long stretch of dark tunnel.

Chen Ge had no idea what was going through the driver's mind. With his eyes closed, he was completely submerged in the darkness, and the surrounding became silent. Perhaps it was his tense nerves, but his body temperature kept slipping. If someone accidentally brushed up against him, they might have thought that they had come into contact with a dead body.

With the sense of sight deprived, he could only rely on his sense of hearing and smell as well as the feeling under his skin to help him recognize everything around him. The wall was uneven, and occasionally, his hands would touch something that felt like moss. When his fingers first brushed up against something wet yet sticky, the hair on Chen Ge's arm rose involuntarily.

"Will I eventually get to the exit this way? It shouldn't be so simple. The hint given the black phone probably carries a different meaning." The blinded Chen Ge moved forward with his hands guiding the way. He could not see anything. The darkness, chilliness, and strange sounds as well as the sensitive touch of his fingers overwhelmed his sensory systems like waves.

With superhuman training and determination, Chen Ge resisted the urge to yank off the blindfold and took one step after another. No sight, no thoughts, no nothing.

Chen Ge adjusted his breathing, and just like his first Nightmare Mission, there was only one thought in his mind—finish the task at hand. His mind detached itself from the sense of time, and Chen Ge had no idea how long he had been walking. Different from his previous Nightmare Mission, this time, he did not even pause to count his heartbeat or footsteps. He had completely emptied his mind.

Caressing the wet surface of the wall, he kept on walking until suddenly his hands caught nothing.

There's a hole in the wall? White Dragon Cave Tunnel was a straight route, and there were no turns, so something like this should not have happened.

Should I take off the blindfold to look? Before Chen Ge could make the decision, someone suddenly pulled on his arm, and the person who did that was shaking so violently that Chen Ge could feel that through the skin contact.

"Calm down, what did you see?" The unknown was often the scariest. After losing his sight, Chen Ge's emotions were more easily influenced by the people around him.

"It's just on your left. The thing is right next to your left cheek. He's very close, please, do not move!" the driver replied anxiously, his voice thick with terror.

"Don't panic, describe the thing's appearance. Is it a person or a bug?" Chen Ge stood where he was, careful not to move a muscle, but he waited for a long time, and there was no reply at all. "Are you there?"

In the empty tunnel, only the echo of Chen Ge's own voice remained. The driver seemed to have disappeared into thin air.

"What exactly did he see?" If the driver had just disappeared, Chen Ge would not have been so worried, but his timing was just so suspicious. He had left behind such a cryptic message before he disappeared.

He had told Chen Ge very explicitly that there was something unique and probably terrifying sitting right next to Chen Ge's left cheek.

"The driver's disappearance should be related to this thing, but that is not for certain. Something might have already happened to the man after I decided to put on the blindfold, and it has been someone else who has been following me. He's purposely trying to make me look to the left." Chen Ge had no idea what the truth was. All he could do was try his luck within an acceptable range of possibilities that he could still control.

Raising his arm, Chen Ge touched the left side of his face—there was nothing there. He sighed in relief before slowly moving his arm toward the wall. His fingers soon touched the cold stone wall, and he did not brush up against anything weird. He extended his fingers and stopped at the edge of the wall and the supposed hole.

"There's a strange split in the road that is supposed to be straight. Shall I turn into it to take a look?" Resisting the desire to peel off the blindfold, Chen Ge raised both of his hands, and like a blind person, he slowly nudged toward the mouth of the opening on his left.

"Where will this route lead me to?" It was supposed to be a straight tunnel, but for some reason, he had ended up inside a maze. With every few steps, Chen Ge left a deep scratch on the wall, leaving behind a trail of marks.

He continued walking like that for a few minutes, and then Chen Ge's fingers felt air for the second time. Another split had appeared on his journey.

It was because of the hint on the black phone that Chen Ge had decided to blindfold himself, but the result made him feel greatly unsettled. This straight tunnel seemed to have split into endless turns and corners. Like a person's fate in life, one would never know what was awaiting at the next turn of the corner.

"Xu Yin..." Chen Ge was worried that he might be greeted with a nasty surprise once he tore off the blindfold and placed himself in danger, so before doing that, he summoned Xu Yin. The smell of blood suffused the air, and Chen Ge took in a deep breath. His nerves slowly calmed down, and Xu Yin's presence gave him the sense of security that he had been lacking.

Rubbing his eyes, Chen Ge looked around with Yin Yang Vision. He discovered to his surprise that he was standing at the spot that he started his journey; a few meters behind him was the taxi covered in bloody handprints.

The vehicle was still there, but the driver had already disappeared. With Xu Yin's accompaniment, Chen Ge walked down the tunnel. He did not come across any splits, nor could he find the markings that he scratched on the wall.

The tunnel that he saw with his eyes and the tunnel that he felt with his fingers did not seem to be the same one. This was a strange feeling like one was reality, and the other was a dream, but strangely enough, they were somehow intermingling to form an endlessly repeating circle.

“No wonder the shadow lost once in a place like this. I should consider myself lucky that I was able to escape last time.” White Dragon Cave Tunnel was a unique location, but Chen Ge had no idea what the reason behind its uniqueness was.

“So, the question is, which of the tunnels is the real one? And why were those homeless spirits and souls so drawn to this place? Is it possible that they somehow perceive this place as the cycle of reincarnation?”

This Trial Mission was a lot more complicated than Chen Ge thought. He did not dare move recklessly. He flipped open the comic and released all of his employees.

“Ol’ Zhou and Duan Yue, I need you two to guard the taxi. The rest of you, follow me. Try not to leave too much space between you.” Chen Ge had been to this tunnel before, and based on his online research, he knew clearly how long this tunnel should be.

Chen Ge summoned all of his employees because he wanted to test out his hypothesis.

Chapter 610: Creature That Lives in Nightmares

Chen Ge’s plan was very simple; he was going to use the special connection between the ghosts to repeat the steps that he took earlier. But unlike before, this time, he decided to have Bai Qiulin take his place. He wanted to see if the same situation would happen when it was a ghost that was blindfolded. Bai Qiulin had his eyes blindfolded by his boss before he understood what was happening.

“Don’t think about anything. Empty your mind and walk ahead.” Chen Ge and Xu Yin stood about three to four meters behind Bai Qiulin, watching his every move. If anything happened, they would come to his aid instantly.

Not knowing what his boss was up to, Bai Qiulin still followed his order because, in his mind, his boss was always right. He walked down the tunnel for a long time, but what happened to Chen Ge did not replicate itself on Bai Qiulin. Even when he was told to remove the blindfold, Bai Qiulin’s face was still colored with confusion, unable to understand his boss’ action.

“Having the ghost blindfolded is pointless, but why is that so? Most of the ghosts are formed from the lingering desire of a living human, and the biggest difference between them and a normal human is that they don’t possess a physical form. Could it be because when I’m moving down the tunnel with my eyes open, it’s a world that is observable to the living humans, but once I close my eyes, I’m moving through a world of the spirits?”

A normal person would not have considered a possibility like that, but Chen Ge was different. In this field, he had a wealth of experience, and his way of thinking was different from most. Many times, he would assume the perspective of the ghost to see things.

“I cannot confirm that one hundred percent, but it is a big possibility. In any case, this experiment has indirectly proven something—the strange things will only happen after I have my eyes blindfolded.” To have the ghost replace his spot to find the way out was impossible, and Chen Ge was back to square one.

“Looks like I’ll have to do this myself. But with my employees around me, this time, it should be much safer.” Chen Ge led the ghosts back to the taxi and gave Ol’ Zhou and Bai Qiulin some orders before putting on the blindfold. This was his third time venturing into the tunnel.

Darkness swallowed Chen Ge, but he did not feel that worried with his employees watching over him. He walked down the tunnel for ten minutes before finally stopping. The split in the road did not appear, and the tunnel kept going straight, one way forward, leading nowhere.

“Why have I failed this time? Where is the problem?” The difference between his first run and his third run was the number of participants. The first time, Chen Ge did it with the driver, but this time, Chen Ge did it with all of his employees.

“Is there a number limitation? That’s unlikely, it’s more possible that my employees have prevented the thing that should appear around me from coming.”

When the driver disappeared, he had mentioned a strange thing appearing next to Chen Ge’s left cheek. Thinking back, the changing of the tunnel probably had everything to do with that strange thing.

“The driver disappeared in the middle of his sentence, and that was probably that thing’s doing as well.” Chen Ge looked down the dark tunnel and started to hesitate. With his employees, the thing did not dare turn up, but if he put his employees away, there was no guaranteeing his own safety.

He lowered his head to look at his phone. Chen Ge wanted to see how long he still had until his mission time, but to his surprise, he noticed that the time on his phone was running backward, like instead of a clock, it had transformed into a timer.

“What is wrong with this phone? Why is the time running backward? I’ve been in the tunnel at least half an hour already, but the time is still showing the moment when I first stepped into the tunnel.”

Something must have happened. Chen Ge leaned against the wall and frowned in contemplation.

“No one is powerful enough to mess with time, so what could have happened here?” He had not experienced this type of anxiety in a long time. At a time like this, his employees were unable to give him any aid.

With no method to leave the tunnel, Chen Ge was unable to save himself, much less complete the Trial Mission.

He looked into the darkness, and his expression turned severe. “These things didn’t happen when I came alone the first time.”

Thinking back to his previous mission experience and picking out the details, Chen Ge finally made a decision. He put all his ghosts back into his comic, and the originally crowded tunnel instantly cold and silent. In the darkness, only two shadows stood opposite one another.

“You can go now, leave the rest to me.” Patting Xu Yin lightly on his shoulder, Chen Ge switched off the recorder. He put everything away and straightened up. He kept his eyes level, and not a shred of fear could be found on his face.

“All the missions on the black phone are fair. Without effort, there shall be no reward, and the risk and reward are always proportional.

“I’ve been spared adventures like this for a long time already. I’ve almost forgotten this feeling that was common when I first obtained the black phone, the feeling of dancing at the edge of a cliff or on a thin line. One wrong move, and everything will over.”

Chen Ge took in a deep breath and he spoke to the air.

“And now, I’m all alone again.”

He tossed his backpack into his taxi, and like his previous Nightmare Mission, he was alone. Without any weapon, without his employees, he walked toward the deepest darkness with nothing but himself.

“I do wish to see how the world will change after I close my eyes.” With a firm determination, Chen Ge seemed to say that to provoke, his eyes filling up with condescension. He picked up the torn sleeve, and at the last second before putting on the blindfold, he looked behind him and called out Zhang Ya’s name silently.

There was no answer—his shadow was just his shadow. The blindfold came on, and this time, there was no one next to him, just like his very first Nightmare Mission.

Holding the wall, he slowly nudged forward. He only walked for several meters before a shuffling sound appeared next to his ears like the sound of thousands of centipedes crawling on the wall.

“Everything will go to waste once I open my eyes, so this time, no matter what happens, I will not open my eyes.” Part of the confidence that Chen Ge had came from Zhang Ya in his shadow. He knew that she would not watch him get seriously injured.

“Come on, show me what is at the end of the tunnel.” Chen Ge did not hesitate and walked through the shuffling. He was using himself as bait to wait for the ‘big fish’ in the tunnel to bite.

It felt like someone was blowing air into his ears, and his body temperature slipped downward, but none of that was able to stop Chen Ge’s footsteps.