

Horrors 701

Chapter 701: Ghosts Look Like That?

Lee Changyin was the 'most popular actor' at Nightmare Academy. There was an air of madness around him that did not need to be faked. He only needed to be himself to get the madness required of the character to come to life. Standing in the shadow of the hotel entrance, he put on the pregnant woman's outfit that he had found in one of the buildings and took out the make-up tools from the waist bag that he wore on him at all times. With just a few strokes, he looked completely different from before.

With his naturally soft features and the help of make-up, even though he still had short hair, Lee Changyin looked quite like a woman already.

There's no wig, I'll have to make do with a cap.

He ran into the nearby building, found a bedsheet, rolled it up into a ball, and shoved it under his shirt, not caring about how dirty the bedsheet was.

When all his preparations were complete, Lee Changyin returned to the hotel entrance. He studied Zhang Jingjiu inside the hotel from the corner of his eyes. After he prepared his emotions, he uttered in a voice hoarse with tears, "Can you help me? I've lost something."

His voice was completely different from before, sounding very much like a girl. Zhang Jingjiu was still studying acting, but when he heard the cry for help, he quickly put the phone down.

Is it a visitor? He thought that it was finally time for him to shine. He stood up and walked toward the entrance.

Seeing that Zhang Jingjiu was hooked, Lee Changyin immediately retreated to an alley between the hotel and another building. He stood deep inside the alley so that the people outside could only see his shadow.

"Is there anything that I can help you with?" Zhang Jingjiu saw the person hiding in the alley, and he thought it was because the person was like Wang Dan who treated everything that they saw in the Haunted House as a ghost.

"I have lost something very important. Can you please help me look for it?" It was still a very pitiable female voice that said that, but Lee Changyin's expression was quite venomous at that moment. After he shed his disguise, that was how he looked for real.

"Of course." Even though Zhang Jingjiu was suspicious, he gave it some thought and realized that there was nothing to worry because this was their own territory. He entered the alley and noticed the bump on Lee Changyin's stomach when he got closer.

A pregnant woman?

A page of the worker's manual flashed across Zhang Jingjiu's mind. Due to safety considerations, pregnant women were not allowed entry into the Haunted House.

If it's not a visitor, then it has to be an old worker here...

Zhang Jingjiu slowed down. He knew very clearly what kind of 'things' took up the roles of actors in Chen Ge's Haunted House.

Noticing the man slow down, Lee Changyin's eyes narrowed, and he became more cautious. They both suspected that the other was a ghost, and both started to act strangely because of it.

"My stomach is very pained. Can you please help me? I lost the thing around here." Lee Changyin continued to speak in his fake voice.

"What have you lost?" Zhang Jingjiu was almost certain that he was dealing with an old employee, so it did not cross his mind that a visitor might have put on a disguise to scare him. Even though he was afraid, considering that he would need to work at the Haunted House for a long time, he naturally had to form good relationship with his seniors, so he suppressed his fear and did not run and leave.

Hearing Zhang Jingjiu's answer, Lee Changyin's expression darkened further. When a normal person encountered a pregnant woman that said her stomach was painful and she was searching for something inside a Haunted House, should their first reaction not have been to call the ambulance or contact the owner?

But the man took him seriously like he was sincerely going to help him find the thing that he had lost.

"I've lost something very important. He has accompanied me for nine months. I was about to see him soon, but I accidentally lost him," Lee Changyin 'cried' even harder.

Just hearing the description was enough to make the hair on Zhang Jingjiu's arms stand. He grumbled internally, *So, the important thing that she has lost is none other than her child!*

Zhang Jingjiu reached his hand into his pocket and silently pressed the walkie-talkie's button, but no one gave him a response telling him what to do, so he could only rely on himself.

If she's not a madwoman who has sneaked into the Haunted House, then she will be an old employee who ran into some trouble. Even though I'm new here, at least I've been through a lot with Boss Chen, so I will not be looked down on by the old employees.

Thinking back to his experience in Li Wan City, Zhang Jingjiu's jaw set with determination.

No matter how scary it might be, can it be scarier than Li Wan City?

With that in mind, Zhang Jingjiu walked to the 'pregnant woman' and volunteered his help. "Don't worry, I'll help you look for it."

The way that he walked over to help without hesitation caused Lee Changyin some panic; things were not going as expected. *Is this man really a ghost?*

As Zhang Jingjiu got closer to him, Lee Changyin immediately adjusted his emotions. He tried to regain the upper hand so that he could siphon useful information out from Zhang Jingjiu.

“Did you lose it around here?” Zhang Jingjiu asked. The light was dim. Since he believed that the other person was a ghost, he did not switch on the light, but he did place his hand inside his pocket, holding the walkie-talkie, so that he could call Boss Chen for help should the need arise.

“Yes, I dream of him every night. He said that he’s very cold. He wishes to climb onto the bed, to share the warmth of the cover...”

“Fine, fine, you can stop now.” Zhang Jingjiu shrugged helplessly. “I’ll help you look for him. After all, I have nothing better to do at the moment.”

Zhang Jingjiu’s answer stunned Lee Changyin’s once again. The man did not get scared by his scary story but promised to help him solve his problem. *This man is truly abnormal!*

Lee Changyin felt like he had stumbled across the final secret of Chen Ge’s Haunted House. The place could get so popular probably because none of his actors were actual people!

As Zhang Jingjiu got closer, Lee Changyin’s whole body tensed; he wished to get further confirmation. He lifted his made-up face. Their eyes met, and Zhang Jingjiu shivered, but he also confirmed his previous thought; the thing before him was definitely the Haunted House’s old worker.

“Big Sister, don’t worry, no matter what you’ve lost, I will help you find it. If we cannot find him today, we’ll continue the search tomorrow. After all, we have plenty of time.” Zhang Jingjiu forced himself to calm down.

Hearing that, Lee Changyin’s pupils shuddered. *What does he mean by that? We have plenty of time? After you hear a pregnant woman tell such a scary story, the response is that we have plenty of time? Is it because I’ve been discovered, or does he wish to harm me? That shouldn’t be—this is just a Haunted House visit.*

The distance between the two closed. The light was dim. They seemed to be purposely getting close to each other, both parties wanting to prove something.

“Don’t worry, I’ve come to help you.” Zhang Jingjiu walked to Lee Changyin’s side. He studied Lee Changyin’s face like he was trying to memorize the man’s features so that he could complain about ‘her’ to Boss Chen after work.

Lee Changyin also studied Zhang Jingjiu closely. This was his first supernatural encounter in his life, and he wanted to remember what a ghost looked like.

Chapter 702: Stuck Between Two Men

Standing in the dark alley, Zhang Jingjiu and Lee Changyin studied each other. Neither of them spoke; they had not interacted directly with a ghost before, and the atmosphere turned strange and awkward.

Zhang Jingjiu coughed once. He had worked in sales before, so his personality was more outward than Lee Changyin. He knew they could not just stand there all day, so he decided to move the conversation forward.

“Don’t panic, can you tell me what the thing looks like? Like the size or length, or does he possess any special characteristics?”

“Describe him to you? Size, length, and special characteristics?” Lee Changyin was stumped by Zhang Jingjiu’s question. *Is that even a question that a living human would ask?*

He had merely come up with a story earlier; he did not expect the man to treat it so seriously. But since the tale had already been spun, after a moment’s hesitation, Lee Changyin stated, “His face is blurred, and he’s covered in blood. He keeps crying, complaining about how cold it is.”

“Well, it’s going to be a bit troublesome if he has a blurred face.” Zhang Jingjiu held his chin and started to contemplate it seriously. “If he said he’s very cold, then he might be placed inside the freezer, but if that’s the case, then his blood should be frozen, so that possibility is not that high. Let me think where else could cause him this chilling sensation. Oh yes! The hospital’s morgue! Your child probably sneaked into the hospital. I think you can go there and check. Pay attention the sound of crying—the room with the loudest cries should be where your child is hiding in.”

“Are you serious?” Lee Changyin had immense confidence in his make-up technique and acting. He was the best actor at Nightmare Academy, but he started to doubt himself before Zhang Jingjiu. The man cooperated with his story to the best of his ability, but that roused the suspicion in Lee Changyin’s heart that he had seen through everything and was trying to lead him to the morgue.

Zhang Jingjiu had no idea what Lee Changyin was thinking. He nodded. “If he’s not at the hospital, there’s no need to worry. After all, this place is only so big. Eventually, I’m sure you will be reunited with him.”

Lee Changyin failed to understand that he had been consoled by a ghost—how would one describe the feeling? It was a little bit scary and quite exciting.

“Thank you, I think I will go there now.” Lee Changyin’s voice was shaking. He hid himself in the shadows with his head lowered to hide his Adam’s apple.

“No problem. After all, we’re already family.” Zhang Jingjiu thought that the ghost was quite polite and knew how to show her appreciation. It seemed that the other employees at the Haunted House were not as unapproachable as he had first thought.

“We’re family? What do you mean?” Lee Changyin’s heart raced. Was the ghost going to kill him and seal his soul inside the Haunted House to indenture him there forever as well?

“Currently, we’re still unfamiliar with each other since this is our first meeting, but after we work together for a long time, we’ll naturally get to know each other better.” Zhang Jingjiu squeezed an awkward smile on his face.

“Work together for a long time?” Lee Changyin’s heart creaked, and his fists tightened! The true purpose had been revealed! So, all along, the ghost had been targeting him! This man with the strange smile had seen through his disguise, and he wanted him to stay at the Haunted House forever!

Sweat wetted the make-up on his forehead. Lee Changyin knew that a normal Haunted House worker would not have run to him and spoken about a future of them working together should they encounter a pregnant stranger in the Haunted House.

The more Lee Changyin thought about it, the more unsettled he felt. He finally understood why he had been feeling so unsettled since he stepped into this place. This place was really haunted!

“We’ll chat in the future then.” Lee Changyin hurried to leave.

“The hospital on the left side!” Zhang Jingjiu saw Lee Changyin leave in such a hurry, and he scratched his nose. “Did I say something wrong to offend her? It feels like I’ve been wronged for some reason.”

Before Lee Changyin wandered too far away, the walkie-talkie in Zhang Jingjiu’s pocket rang. He quickly took it out.

“Jingjiu, why did you summon me earlier?” Chen Ge’s voice came out from the machine.

“An old worker came to find me and asked me some questions, but don’t worry, we had quite a pleasurable interaction.”

“An old employee came to find you?” Chen Ge was confused. “A normal worker wouldn’t leave their building. Without an anchor, they will continue to weaken. Both of the Red Specters are seriously injured, and they have promised me that they will not actively go and seek out the visitors. Jingjiu, what did the person that you encountered look like?”

“It was a pregnant woman...”

“Okay, I understand it now. That was not one of us; some other party has infiltrated our place.”

“What should we do now?” Zhang Jingjiu was panicked. He really did not think that the pregnant woman was not a Haunted House worker.

“You’ve seen the ghosts and monsters at Eastern Jiujiang. When there’s light in the world, there will be darkness. If there are people like me who uphold justice, there will be people who have wickedness in their hearts. But don’t worry, no matter who it is, if they dare to cause trouble inside my Haunted House, they should be prepared to enjoy an experience of their lifetime.”

“Understood.” Zhang Jingjiu described the pregnant woman’s appearance in more detail to Chen Ge before hanging up.

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Putting the walkie-talkie away, Chen Ge stood at the junction. When he first heard Zhang Jingjiu’s report, he had thought that the shadow had sent some of his underlings. But the more he heard the report, the more he felt that something was wrong. The pregnant woman was probably being played by a living human.

There were professional Haunted House actors mixed in the visiting group. They followed the live-streamer Yellow Wolf, and for the sake of effect, some of them might pretend to be ghosts.

“Hopefully, I’m worried for nothing.” Haunted House was Chen Ge’s base, so he could not afford to be too careless. For the sake of insurance, Chen Ge contacted Tong Tong and had him awaken all the ghosts within the scenario so that they could locate the suspicious visitor as soon as possible.

Laughter and cries echoed through the small town. Shadows climbed out from the walls and corners; the hidden spirits were awakened, and they started to wander the streets. In just a few seconds, Chen Ge received the message from Tong Tong and Scissors.

Tong Tong had found the man, but Scissors did one better. He told Chen Ge that he had been following the man. The man acted very suspiciously, unlike a normal visitor.

“Hold on, we’ll move together when I arrive.” Chen Ge glanced at the time on his phone. It was about time for the tour to end.

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Tossing the pregnancy outfit and bedsheet into a random room, Lee Changyin hustled toward the exit in his mind without even taking off the make-up. He did not dare make too much noise lest he attracted more supernatural beings. He called his colleagues, but no one answered as if he had been isolated in a different world.

As the visiting hour came to an end, the small town turned scarier and darker. The streets that should have been empty filled with shadows. The fog around the town thickened, and one could smell the scent of blood in it.

“It feels like there’s a pair of eyes on me.” Lee Changyin scratched his neck. He was flustered and comfortable. He would turn back to look whenever there was a draft. “There’s someone behind me!”

After running around a corner, Lee Changyin suddenly picked up his speed. He switched on the flashlight on his phone and shone it behind him. In the fog, there was a strange man in a trench coat holding a large pair of scissors chasing after him.

“I knew it!” Lee Changyin was still relatively calm then. He knew that the light from the phone would expose his location, so he immediately switched it off. “I’ve been to this building before. After you go in the front door, you can jump out from the back window. I’ll use this chance to lose the monster.”

That was a good idea, but when he started to run forward, he stopped moving.

At the corner of the street, a man wreathed in chains, wearing a doctor’s outfit and dragging a scary-looking hammer, was slowly walking toward him.

Chapter 703: Scared Until My Illness Has Recovered

Taking pictures, livestreaming inside the Haunted House, Chen Ge had forgiven all that; those were within an acceptable range. After all, they were in a way promoting his Haunted House.

However, to put on a disguise to scare his own people, that was pushing it a bit too far.

To Chen Ge, this was a malicious activity and should be punished accordingly. The Haunted House was everything that Chen Ge had, and as the number of visitors increased so did the people who came to cause trouble. If he showed weakness once, it would only invite more trouble in the future.

Li Wan City was a 3.5-star scenario, situated between three-star and four-star scenarios. Chen Ge had just unlocked the scenario, and he had not explored it seriously yet, so the difficulty did not appear not that high. Actually, Li Wan City's scenario still had many hidden treasures waiting for Chen Ge to explore, like the fog that seemed to appear out of thin air and the hidden missions attached to the scenario.

He needed plenty of time to fully understand this scenario, and that was exactly what Chen Ge was currently lacking.

When there's enough free time, I'll work on completing the scenario, but for now, I should deal with the imminent problem first.

Chen Ge wore Doctor Skull-cracker's apparel and stood at the junction—that was a path that one had to take to leave the scenario.

The bloodied doctor's outfit materialized out of the fog. Accompanying the scratching sound of the chains dragging on the floor, Chen Ge walked out from the fog. Under the mask made from human skin, a pair of cold eyes were staring at Lee Changyin quietly. It was not a gaze that should belong to living human—it was filled with an indescribable chilliness.

For the many years that he had worked at Nightmare Academy, Lee Changyin had met many professional actors, and he could confirm that the gaze that he was seeing could not be perfected from acting. That pair of eyes must have seen plenty of supernatural phenomena and nightmares.

The make-up on his face was ruined. Stuck between a rock and a hard place, Lee Changyin knew that he was cornered. Running was pointless, and it would only provoke the man, so the best solution was to give up the struggle. That way, he might survive with his last shred of pride intact.

"You are the Haunted House's workers, right?" Lee Changyin forced a smile on his face. "I've given up, can you please lead me outside?"

"You're one of the visitors?" Chen Ge's voice came out from the mask. He sounded hoarse like he was chewing something hard in his mouth.

"Yes, I signed the disclaimer before I entered. My name is..."

Before Lee Changyin finished, Chen Ge cut him off. "There is no pregnant woman among the visitors today. Our surveillance captured everything clearly. We wouldn't allow a pregnant woman to enter the Haunted House, so you definitely aren't one of the visitors," Chen Ge said firmly like he had dictated the last word on this fact.

"Pregnant woman? Who's pregnant? I am a visitor. I have surrendered, so please lead me out now." Lee Changyin started to panic. The man did not seem like he was going to let him go so easily; he kept insisting that he was a pregnant woman, and that was the pretext that he needed to force him to stay.

"Aren't you a pregnant woman? I can see that clearly with my own two eyes. You are wearing a pregnancy outfit and have a high voice and a pretty face. None of the visitors that we welcomed into the scenario looked like you." Chen Ge walked slowly toward Lee Changyin, dragging the hammer. "Speak, what is your real identity?"

"I am Lee Changyin! I signed the disclaimer, and yes, I did pretend to be a pregnant woman earlier!" Lee Changyin sensed that things had gotten out of hand. He quickly voiced the truth, afraid that the man might assault him if he explained himself too late.

Chen Ge paused and then continued with a sigh. "Looks like you're unwilling to tell the truth. In that case, some persuasion is in order."

Hearing Chen Ge's words, Lee Changyin's mind was fraying. "But I am telling you the truth! I am a visitor! Let me out!"

"I am not an unreasonable person, if you tell me the truth, I won't trouble you too much, but if you insist on lying to me, then I will have to deal with you like how I deal with other petty thieves." Chen Ge suddenly picked up speed. He raised the hammer and charged at Lee Changyin. "Speak! Who are you!"

The hammer that was covered in spikes enlarged in Lee Changyin's eyes. He was not going to stand there and answer Chen Ge's question. However, a question did surface in his mind—why was the iron hammer covered with so much spikes and blood grooves?

The hammer landed on the window just next to Lee Changyin. The cement shattered. Lee Changyin slithered away. Compared to the 'doctor' that blocked his way, he now realized how cute the strange man in the trench coat behind him was.

Lee Changyin's brain was wired differently from a normal person's. Even at that moment, he could maintain a clear mind. He turned back, and before Scissors could catch him, he crashed through the door next to him. He intended to escape through the back window.

Chen Ge naturally would not let him escape. He had already ordered the shadows to block the window and had Scissors guard the backdoor. He summoned all the free workers and stepped into the building together.

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"Where are they? Why isn't the phone working?" A creep who liked to expose himself walked out from the corner of the room. He held his phone and grumbled angrily. "What kind of horrible Haunted House is this? There isn't even one worker. I can't believe I held such anticipation before I arrived here."

Pushing open the door, he stepped out into the street. The town was shrouded in fog.

"When did it fog up?" The man glanced at the time. "The tour is going to end in about one or two minutes; I am not going to waste the entrance fee of fifty RMB."

With his head lowered, the man started to search for his target. He sneaked up to the flickering shadows in the fog, but he only paid attention to those who had a feminine shape.

"Lights are installed inside this building, so there should be someone inside." The man soon locked onto his target. When he passed one of the rooms, he caught a person in a pregnancy outfit sitting on the sofa.

"A pregnant ghost? That's certainly a novelty." The man chuckled salaciously. He leaped in through the window and started to undo the buttons on his coat. Peeling the coat back, he waited for the actor to scream, but several seconds passed, and the room was still so quiet.

“What’s going on?” He lowered his head to look and saw Lee Changyin in a pregnancy outfit slowly sliding down the sofa. He was foaming at the mouth, and his body kept spasming; he looked like he was about to say goodbye to the world.

“Lee Changyin?” The man’s face paled, but before he realized what happened, twisted shadows with missing limbs started to appear from the corner of the room. “What are these? What the f*ck! Stop! Don’t come any closer!”

When everything became quiet again, Chen Ge stopped the recording on his phone and walked out from the bedroom.

“The Haunted House workers charged forward to help when the creep was about to attack a visitor.” After saving the ‘evidence’, Chen Ge walked out from the room. He exited the scenario to find a few trolleys.

“With the new scenario, it feels like these few trolleys aren’t going to be enough.” Chen Ge had Tong Tong inform the other workers to send all the visiting customers to the scenario entrance.

Chapter 704: I’m Here

The noisy commotion flooded into his ears, and his skin felt the warmth of the sun, which he seemed to have not experienced for a long time. Someone held his hand tightly, and that feeling was constantly falling until it finally disappeared. The overly heavy eyelids slowly fluttered to reveal a gap.

“Doc! Is he still okay? It’s normal for us to faint when we visit the Haunted House, but none of us have been unconscious for so long before! Is it possible that he will never wake up again?” The familiar voice entered his brain; it sounded like someone calling him at the edge of heaven. His consciousness slowly settled back in, and his memory reached back from the fringe of his mind.

I’m on a Haunted House visit. Yes, I can remember it now.

Wang Dan tried to open both of his eyes. Even though he tried his best, the only thing that he could do was pull his eyes open slightly.

Yang Chen? The student council president? The seniors from the fourth year? Why are there so many people... Wang Dan wanted to speak, but his pale lips were unable to move.

“Erm... There shouldn’t be any trouble. Don’t worry, based on our experience, he should wake up soon.” The doctor coughed drily. “Don’t crowd around him, step back! Make sure there is a constant air flow.”

The doctors and theme park workers politely asked the people to stand back. Wang Dan looked in the direction of their voices. He was currently lying on the steps of the Haunted House, and around him were the visitors who had gathered there for a show. They were talking among themselves; some took pictures on their phones, some were recording, and there were a selected few that went online to share this via live feed.

I think it’s better for me to stay unconscious. Wang Dan tried his best to turn his head to the side; he did not want to gain online fame from fainting at a Haunted House. His eyes moved slightly, and out the corner of his eyes, Wang Dan realized that he was actually not alone.

The ten visitors were arranged neatly on the Haunted House's steps, and their faces looked so familiar. They had entered the place together, and now, they were laid down side by side. Perhaps that was the gathering power of a group. Seeing his teammates, Wang Dan did not feel that bad for himself anymore, and he slowly closed his eyes. *At least, I was a hero for a few minutes...*

The heat wave was strong, but the sun was not enough to block the visitors' passion. The 3.5-star scenario had opened to the public for the first time, and all ten visitors had fainted; this could only be described as magnificent.

"The f*ck! Thankfully, I did not act on my urge and rush into it. That has to be the most correct decision in my life!"

"This new scenario is too scary! I heard Boss Chen say this is only the preliminary stage for the four-star scenario, and its difficulty is only between three-star and four-star scenarios!"

"If the devil has a name, its surname must be Chen!"

"Boss Chen, hello there! With you at the helm, New Century Park can be said to enjoy a second renaissance. Do you mind sharing how you managed to do that?"

Pushing the trolleys, Chen Ge was surrounded by a group of visitors. He did not expect taking down all ten visitors to cause a scene as big as this.

"First of all, I am glad that the Haunted House has been able to gain everyone's approval. This Haunted House is everything my parents have left me, and it is the project of my life. That is all I can say."

Chen Ge searched for Uncle Xu among the crowd. He had decided to use this chance to spread the name of the 3.5-star scenario and, at the same time, help promote the incoming four-star scenario. However, to his surprise, the effect was far better than he anticipated. The visitors were so excited that he was trapped by them.

"Boss Chen! We know that building a Haunted House is not easy. Finding the inspiration, writing the story, designing the props... you must have faced plenty of trouble, right? What kind of belief enables you to carry on through all of that?"

Seeing the glow in the visitors' eyes, Chen Ge found it too hard to brush them off. "I've poured too much effort into this Haunted House, from building the scenarios to welcoming the visitors. That kind of anticipation and joy is not something that other people can appreciate. Therefore, the difficulties that you've mentioned do not really amount to anything. There is a sense of responsibility bestowed upon me, and I tell myself, I need to make the best Haunted House I can, so no matter where I go, I keep it in my heart. Because of that, it has become a natural part of my life."

Hearing Chen Ge's answer, some of the visitors could not help nodding. Only someone who poured his everything into this project could have come up with so many wonderful scenarios.

"Here please! Boss Chen! I'm a visitor from Xin Hai! Just half an hour ago, Xin Hai's most famous Nightmare Academy said that they came here to conduct a learning and communication visit with you. What is your opinion about that?"

“Nightmare Academy?” Boss Chen signaled for the people to part, and he pointed at the few people lying on the steps. “They did come, but they were definitely not here for friendly communication. With regards to that, I feel it’s a great pity as well. In the future, I will make sure to personally visit Nightmare Academy to hash this out with them.”

“Boss Chen! I saw from a certain platform that Yellow Wolf was livestreaming inside the Haunted House, and I saw you in his stream! Can you tell us in detail what really happened? Our whole family of nine and our cat is deathly curious about that!”

“You can follow my streaming account for the details. I will talk about it in the future.”

“Boss Chen, there is an online rumor that your Haunted House is really haunted. Is that real or not?”

“Of course, that’s false. There are no ghosts in the world. Everything is just a rumor. If you don’t believe me, you can point the person who told you the rumor to me, and I will face them in person.” Chen Ge’s smile was always so warm; he treated everyone with the same kindness. “Alright then, I need to go back to work. Even though I own this Haunted House, I am one of its workers, and it is still working hours.”

With that excuse, Chen Ge finally slipped away from the visitors. He sighed in relief after he entered the Haunted House. “Scaring ten visitors until they faint, that should be enough to grab people’s attention and gain some popularity. Hopefully, Director Luo will be able to suppress the negative influence from this event so that it won’t be misused by others.”

Chen Ge provided a very sharp blade to promote the Haunted House and theme park. If used well, it could greatly cut down the futuristic theme park’s opening hype. However, if it was not used correctly, one might cut oneself.

Whenever a new scenario opened, there would be a commotion, and that was the effect that Chen Ge was looking for. Because of that, he had brought two Red Specters back from Li Wan City. Jogging back to the scenario, Chen Ge first found the headless woman to console her before going to Li Wan Private Hospital to find the red high heels.

Actually, the red high heels’ luck was not so good. First, she lost all of her power during the fight with the gluttonous woman, then she was injured during the shadow, Zhang Ya, and Doctor Gao’s battle. Adding injury on top of injury, now she only had a shell left.

“Looks like you’re in a good mood.” Chen Ge sat at the door to the morgue and studied the red high heels in his palm. “You did wonderfully this time. If you wish to, you can come back anytime you like in the future. My Haunted House is always open to you.”

The red high heels’ special power was curse, and that was similar to the shadow. After bringing her back to the Haunted House, he, alongside the accompaniment of all his other employees, formed a contract with her. After she helped all the workers cleanse their curses, Chen Ge would allow her to leave.

The red high heels did not really have a choice but to trust Chen Ge. And every day, she had been trying out ways to convert the shadow’s curse. Most of the curses inside Zhang Jingjiu and Scissors had been cleansed already, but the true difficulty lay with the curse in Xu Yin’s body. He was suffering terribly. If not for his opportune evolution into a Red Specter, he would have disappeared already, tortured by the curse.

Pushing open the morgue's door, Chen Ge walked to the sickbed that was at the deepest part of the room. On top of the bed lay a cassette tape that was covered in dark gray spots that looked like bruises.

"Rest well, everything will be fine. I am here." Chen Ge placed the high heels next to the tape and sat down on the bed for ten minutes before leaving.

Chapter 705: Yan Danian: Lesser Red Spectre's Strongest Power

Perhaps the fainting of ten visitors caused too big a scare. Throughout the whole morning, there was no one else who dared challenge the nameless town again. Everyone stuck obediently to low-level scenarios.

The visitors around the Haunted House gradually calmed down. Chen Ge felt that perhaps one day, the visitors would get used to seeing a few fainted people around the Haunted House entrance.

At 2 pm, a few people who proclaimed that they were from Nightmare Academy sought out Chen Ge. They hauled their colleagues back in their cars. One of them was a pair of twins who personally came to apologize to Chen Ge. Chen Ge very graciously accepted their apology and promised that he would visit them if there was a chance in the future.

After the people from Nightmare Academy left, the students from Jiujiang Medical University came. Most of them were Wang Dan's friends. Once they heard that their friend had fainted again, they all went to look after class was over.

"It's not a big problem—he'll soon wake up." Chen Ge came to this conclusion after inspecting Wang Dan's body. Actually, Wang Dan had already woken up a long time ago. As a senior visitor, his ability to suffer these mental scares was far better than the other visitors. Knowing that Chen Ge was kindly giving him the chance to save his face, Wang Dan soon 'woke' up.

"Wang Dan, you've finally woken up!"

"Did you really dare to challenge a 3.5 scenario? You have my admiration!"

The students from the university surrounded Wang Dan, and they did not think that fainting at Chen Ge's Haunted House was something shameful. In fact, they felt as if they were missing out if they did not faint at Chen Ge's place, like something was missing from their university life.

"Not all is lost." Wang Dan forced a smile on his pale face. He lay in the middle of the crowd and looked surprisingly like a valiant soldier. "I've found the key to this 3.5 scenario!"

Wang Dan struggled to turn to Chen Ge. He raised his hand. "Boss Chen, next time, I will succeed!"

"The scenario is built for you all to experience and clear, so naturally, I will always welcome your return." Chen Ge liked spending time with the students—it made him feel younger. Wang Dan and his girlfriend were taken away by the other students. After they disappeared from Chen Ge's view, they surrounded Wang Dan again.

"Wang Dan, what does a 3.5 scenario look like from the inside? How scary is it?"

"I don't think I need to explain how scary it is if all ten visitors fainted from their tour." Wang Dan was still quite weak, and his legs felt like noodles. "The new scenario is a small town, but the scale is huge. I believe it can fit twenty people for one visitation. The place is filled with traps, and the scariest thing is, as time moves forward, the small town itself changes."

"The town changes on its own?" Yang Chen took out his notebook and started to write. "The difficulty will continue to increase?"

"Yes! Fog rolls out on the streets, the telephone signal will be jammed, and more actors will appear to fill up the streets."

"In other words, to clear this new scenario, we need to move fast and find as many clues as we can before the difficulty rises." Yang Chen jotted down everything that Wang Dan said in the notebook; this was precious information that Wang Dan had risked his 'life' for.

"Yes, other than that, I gained some very important information during this visit." Wang Dan thought about it. "Regarding the exit, I found three clues. They are respectively the fridge at the corner of the kitchen, the morgue at the end of the hospital, and the armoire in the room. So, if we try this again, we only need to focus on the fridge, armoire, and morgue."

"Okay, is there anything else that we need to pay attention to?"

"There's one more. I'm not so sure about it, but I believe it's true." Wang Dan hesitated. "Considering the size of the scenario and the possibility of accidents, Boss Chen set up a safe zone inside the scenario. It is at the center of the town, a hotel."

"A safe zone?"

"Yes, the hotel owner is a middle-aged man. Now that I think about it, he didn't have the presence of the other workers, so he shouldn't have been lying to me." Wang Dan provided another crucial tip.

"This info is too important; it can be a life saver." Yang Chen noted this down and circled it in red like all the other important information.

Chen Ge watched the students walk away before turning to the remaining visitors. "This man in the trench coat has broken the law. I should wait for the police to come get him."

There were too many visitors around for him to call the police. Chen Ge waited until 5 pm when the theme park was about to close and called Lee Sanbao and told him everything. During that period, a few other visitors gradually woke up. Zhang Feng's situation was rather bad, but he recovered quite a bit after Chen Ge sent him to the underground morgue. Feeling ashamed of himself, he slithered away without saying a word.

Shinozaki and his assistant acted strangely though. After they woke up, they sat next to the Haunted House like they were waiting for Chen Ge. At 6:40 pm, after sending the last batch of visitors away, when Chen Ge prepared to close the door, Shinozaki and his assistant ran over.

"Boss Chen!" Shinozaki limped over. His hair was ruffled, and his expression was anxious, looking not even a bit like a master.

"How can I help you?" Chen Ge had quite a good impression of Shinozaki.

“I found this comic page inside your Haunted House.” Shinozaki took out a manuscript page from his pocket. When he fainted, he held the page tightly in his hand. “Can I please meet the author? I admire him greatly, and I have something important to discuss with him.”

“You wish to meet him?” Chen Ge knew full well that it was Yan Danian who drew that manuscript.

“Yes! I wish to collaborate with him to share his work with the world. Such a genius shouldn’t be hiding inside a Haunted House!” Shinozaki was excited. It had been so many years since he had come across a piece of work that could affect him so deeply. Every page was artful, and they contained a unique kind of emotion. They painted a real world through the lens of the weird and supernatural.

“Follow me, the artist has a strange temperament, and I can’t guarantee whether he will meet you or not.” Chen Ge asked Tong Tong to contact Yan Danian and led Shinozaki and his assistant back underground.

After getting Yan Danian’s permission, he decided to arrange this meeting. “The author is inside this bedroom. He doesn’t like strangers, so why don’t you converse through the curtains?”

Shinozaki was a known comic artist and knew everything within the industry. Even his assistant was a famed professional. They had their own studio and a mature operating system.

Chen Ge stayed to observe initially, but after he confirmed Shinozaki’s sincerity in working with Yan Danian and his genuine wish to help Yan Danian share his work with the world, he stood up and left.

This was the moment that Yan Danian was able to grasp his lifelong dream, so Chen Ge naturally would not stay to disturb it. Guarding outside the room, about half an hour later, Chen Ge’s black phone suddenly vibrated. He opened it with some curiosity and saw that there was an update to the employee tab.

For Yan Danian, the special power that was a question now turned into a gray term. It was still not useable, but Chen Ge could read its details.

“Wishes Do Come True: The Lesser Red Specter’s Strongest Power! The wish in your heart will come into fruition. Usable once every week. Each usage will cause the pages in the comic to decrease by one permanently!

“My life is a comic; every page is my memory. Promises that I cannot hold will be torn down, tossed into the sky, morphing into wind...”

Chapter 706: The Promises Boss Chen Made

“The wish in your heart will come into fruition? Wait, but there’s no time limit, and it didn’t even explain how long it will take for the wish to come true. Each use will exhaust one page of the comic, will it? This strongest power of the Lesser Red Specter is not as powerful as I anticipated.” Chen Ge read through the introduction on Yan Danian’s special power seriously. “If I have a wish in my heart, I will use my hands to fulfil it. By exhausting another’s life to complete my own dream, even if it does come true, the dream will turn rather meaningless.”

Reading the words on the black phone, Chen Ge could sense the trace of melancholy behind it. Danian painted a strange and curious world with his pens, but at that same time, that world could be seen as the purest and cleanest. It was called supernatural by others simply because it would not have been a part of reality.

Chen Ge put the phone away, and not long after that, Shinozaki and his assistant came out from the room with a large bag. They looked so excited.

“How did the discussion go?” Chen Ge asked.

“Someone like Master Yan is a true artist. It is truly my honor and good fortune to have been given a chance to cooperate with him.” Shinozaki was a prideful man, and it was not easy for him to admit something like that.

“Yan Danian has spent his whole drawing and working. He is a straight-minded person and doesn’t even know how to be cunning. I hope you are sincere in cooperating with him and will not resort to underhanded tricks.” Chen Ge stood in the middle of the dark corridor. He had the bloodied doctor’s outfit on. The chains dragged on the ground, trailing into the darkness.

“Understood, you don’t need to worry about that.” Cold sweat poured out of Shinozaki’s forehead involuntarily. His experience at the Haunted House earlier returned; that memory would probably haunt him for life.

“I’m glad to hear that. I hope for the two of you to have a good collaboration then. Other than that, if it’s possible, I hope that you can mention Western Jiujiang Haunted House on the published comic. After all, Yan Danian is still my employee,” Chen Ge suggested casually.

“That’s no problem, we should help each other.” Shinozaki was familiar with the world of business, but he could not explain his innate fear of this young man. After sending Shinozaki and his assistant away, Chen Ge went to have a chat with Yan Danian.

Yan Danian had handed his work over to the Shinozaki’s studio, and they would publish two comics soon—Ghost Tenants and Underworld Academy.

Ghost Tenants was inspired by Yan Danian’s own life while Underworld Academy was a brand-new work using Mu Yang High School as the background. Both of them would appear on comic websites over the world in serial format. The author would have Yan Danian’s name, and the royalties would be shared 50-50 between Yan Danian and Shinozaki’s studio. Based on Shinozaki’s prediction, Yan Danian could hope to enjoy a comfortable life in the future.

“Money is the source of many sins; Danian is too innocent to handle so much money. To maintain his passion for art, I mustn’t allow him to be corrupted by money. I think I should look after his royalties for now.”

As Yan Danian’s name grew, this Lesser Red Specter might become one of the central pillars of the Haunted House. After dealing with Yan Danian, Chen Ge’s mood turned better. He walked out from the Haunted House. Xu Wan and Xiao Gu left after cleaning the place, but Scissors and Zhang Jingjiu stayed.

“Both of you have done quite well today, but there is room for improvement.” Chen Ge took out his phone and glanced at the memo. “Scissors, you have a natural talent for this, but you still haven’t

explored it to its full potential. When we cornered that visitor earlier, why did he choose to run toward you? It's because he saw weakness in you that he could take advantage of.

"Jingjiu, you don't need to rush. There are many things that a Haunted House worker needs to learn. You've gotten used to the darkness, and that is already a big improvement. Take it slow and give it time. I'll go to the hotel and act as the owner once. Perhaps my interaction with the visitors will give you some inspiration."

After communicating with the new workers, Chen Ge recommended some material for them to read before allowing them to go off work.

"Li Wan City's mission is already over, but there are still loose ends." Chen Ge waited until sundown before he grabbed his backpack and hailed a taxi to get to White Dragon Cave Tunnel. When he reached the tunnel, the sky was completely dark.

"The shadow's heart was shared by Zhang Ya and Doctor Gao, and it has completely disappeared, but the ghost fetus is still alive. This four-star mission will definitely be much more difficult than Li Wan City. After it is birthed, it will come to find me trouble, so the best solution is to locate it before its birth."

The ghost fetus was probably a Greater Red Specter and a Specter more terrifying than Zhang Ya.

"If I can't stop it before its birth, then my hope is on Zhang Ya making a breakthrough."

Both sides were racing against time, and the current calm was exactly the state before the storm. Closing his eyes, Chen Ge touched the wall and headed deeper into the jungle. He recited a name in his heart. When he got to the forty-fourth recitation, the air around him thickened, and a chilling presence surged around his heart.

"You managed to return alive?"

Hearing that familiar voice, Chen Ge's eyes slowly opened. "You should be more familiar with the changes in Eastern Jiujiang than I am. The shadow has already been consumed."

The large spider shadow loomed over Chen Ge. At the top of the tunnel, large appendages crawled out from the darkness, and a hissing spider dangled above Chen Ge's head.

"The shadow has been consumed? By whom?" The spider's upper body was that of a boy. This was the woman in the tunnel's son, and he was the real owner of the three-star mission, The Tunnel.

"It doesn't really matter. The important thing is that we seem to have created a bigger problem." Chen Ge told him about the ghost fetus; he wanted to drag this Red Specter before him into the mess. Chen Ge's words confirmed some of the boy's suspicions. The more he heard, the darker his face became. Killing Chen Ge now would amount to nothing.

"I've brought her back safely, and I hope we can cooperate again in the future." After saying all he needed to, Chen Ge released the boy's mother from the comic and retraced his step.

Walking out the tunnel, Chen Ge went down the street for half an hour before he caught a cab. He carried his bag and rode the taxi to a certain abandoned mental asylum in Western Jiujiang. Chen Ge leaped over the wall with ease to enter the Third Sick Hall. He pried open the door and entered the corridor filled with pillows and mattresses.

“Men Nan?” Opening the comic, Chen Ge summoned Men Nan. The red shadow appeared beside Chen Ge. When Men Nan saw the familiar halls, he felt hot tears prickling his eyes.

“Welcome home.” Chen Ge stretched lazily. He felt weirdly comfortable at this strange place, probably because he had been there way too many times.

“This is my home, not yours!” Men Nan complained weakly. As a Red Specter, he felt like he should act with the dignity of one, but whenever he saw Chen Ge, he felt the urge to go on a rampage.

Chapter 707: How Is the Horror Movie Coming Along?

“Of course, of course, you’re the Red Specter after all.” Chen Ge shrugged as he walked into the hall.

“Hey! What are you planning to do? I’m going to return already!” Men Nan was nervous. He had a feeling that Chen Ge had an ulterior motive for taking him home. In his mind, that was exactly the kind of person Chen Ge was.

Chen Ge stood in surprise and said matter-of-factly, “Since I’m here, aren’t you going to invite me to go behind the door to take a look?”

“You...” Men Nan also did not know what to tell Chen Ge, since he was the first living human who asked to go behind the door. “At twelve midnight, the door can only be opened for a minute, so you can only stay inside my door for a minute. If you stay longer, you’ll have to wait until tomorrow to leave.”

“Only one minute?” Chen Ge did not want to trouble Men Nan too much. “Fine, after all, there’ll be plenty of chances in the future. You’d better go and fix your windows then. I won’t disturb you anymore.”

“Then I can go now?” Men Nan regarded him with caution like he was unwilling to believe that Chen Ge would be so kind.

“Go ahead, you’ve helped me many times. If you come across any problems that you cannot solve in the future, you can come and find me any time.”

“That won’t happen. As long as I don’t get entangled with you, I won’t run into any problem,” Men Nan grumbled softly.

“That might not be true. The shadow that we killed earlier is the puppet of a Greater Red Specter. If we don’t kill its true form, that Greater Red Specter will eventually come to visit.”

“Greater Red Specter?” Men Nan’s face turned paler and he widened his eyes. He thought the shadow was already the scariest monster, but he still possessed a main body.

“That monster’s true form is called ghost fetus, created from curses and resentment. It is highly vengeful, so you need to be careful.” With that, Chen Ge turned to leave. Walking out from the Third Sick Hall, Chen Ge flipped through the comic, thinking about the things that he still had not done.

“I am a man of my word. I still haven’t started on the promise that I’ve given the suicide hotline operator, Zhang Wenyu. Whenever I help him complete the death wish of the suicide victim, he will help

me in return.” Chen Ge had limited manpower. Finding the ghost fetus, which could be anywhere in Jiujiang, was very difficult, but Zhang Wenyu was different. He carried the lingering spirits of all the suicide victims that he had interacted with him. He needed to help all of them before he could receive salvation. But correspondingly, those lingering spirits attached to him would provide him with their power.

Zhang Wenyu was a unique Red Specter, and even Chen Ge had no idea how powerful he was. Chen Ge merely thought that the man’s power could not have been better for a manhunt.

“I have already helped the man with the Nobita-Giant Syndrome complete his wish. Based on our agreement, I can ask for his help once.” Chen Ge took out his phone and called the number that he had memorized. After three rings, the call was picked up, but there was no voice to greet him.

“I will help you complete the victims’ wishes as fast as I can, but I have recently run into a very troublesome problem, and I hope that you can lend me a hand.” Chen Ge cut to the chase and voiced his purpose.

“What do you want me to do?” Zhang Wenyu’s throaty voice came through the phone.

“I need to find an unborn child. I’ve seen its face, and I’ll send you a sketch in a minute.” Chen Ge had Yan Danian draw the face of the baby in the shadow’s chest, which should be the ghost fetus’ appearance.

“Even if I know what it looks like, it is still not yet born. How am I supposed to know where it is?”

“You are a Red Specter; you should have your own method.”

Both parties were silent before finally Zhang Wenyu said, “Okay, I will try my best.”

“The baby’s main form is the ghost fetus. It appears to be a Greater Red Specter, and it is very dangerous, so you have to be careful during your search.” After dealing with that, Chen Ge moved to another topic. “Previously, you gave me three lingering spirits’ wishes. I’ve already completed two—the patient with Giant-Nobita Syndrome and the cancer patient who died on the rail—but the third one is a bit difficult.”

“The third wish?”

“Yes, the patient who wanted to see his work made into a movie.” Chen Ge owned a Haunted House, so he did not know heads or tails about movie-making. It was going to be hard to complete this wish. “Can you show me other lingering spirits? I will help them first.”

“That is not an issue, but the writer’s spirit is very powerful, and I have a hard time controlling him. If we cannot resolve his wish as soon as possible, I might even be consumed by him.” Zhang Wenyu sounded helpless. “You’ll have to help him fulfil his wish. That is one of the reasons I reached out to you.”

“Okay then, I’ll try to come up with a way.” After hanging up, Chen Ge wandered down the road aimlessly.

“It should be fine, leaving the search for the ghost fetus to the Zhang Wenyu, but the shooting of the movie is indeed a bit troublesome.” Chen Ge took out his own phone, and he was struck by a sudden

inspiration. “A horror movie is still a movie. Even though I don’t have related talent, it doesn’t mean that the whole of Jiujiang won’t.”

He keyed in the following in the search bar—haunted film set, supernatural phenomenon during filming—and he really did come up with something.

“Known scriptwriter died from accident in the middle of the night. Is it a clever marketing scheme or something more sinister? This is the seventh accident during the shoot of Left Oculus. Is there really a supernatural element behind it?”

Clicking on it, Chen Ge realized that the article had already been removed. He changed a few key words before finding the information that he needed.

Left Oculus was the name of a horror film, but many accidents happened during its shoot. First was the accidental death of the scriptwriter who wanted to edit the script, then came the sudden madness of the female lead and the disappearance of the male lead. After changing the line-up, the filming finally finished, but on the night before the premier, the film set caught on fire, burning up all the clothes and props.

Many people said that this was just a marketing ploy until the director disappeared, and then the news went silent. In the end, the movie did not get its premier. Until now, no one had ever seen it. There were snippets online, but most of them were faked by online users.

“Even the script was burnt in the fire. This sure is interesting.” Chen Ge’s interest was piqued. He got a cab to return to the Haunted House and immediately ran into the staff breakroom. He made his notes as he searched everything that he could on Left Oculus. He busied himself until 2 am, and he finally found several pieces of useful information.

“The maddened female lead is still alive, currently residing in Jiujiang Mental Asylum.

“The crew once used Western Jiujiang’s Yong Ling Mountain as their set background.

“The original script used by the crew was not penned by the scriptwriter but was discovered by the director in an abandoned school in Western Jiujiang.

“According to legend, the director did not disappear, but he is trapped inside the movie.”

Chapter 708: Face-to-Face Interrogation

“Director is trapped inside the movie, huh? This has to be a ghost story.” Chen Ge felt like this fell within his job scope, so he could not just let it be. He raised his head to glance at the clock on the wall; it was already 2:30 am. “Even with a cab, going to Yong Ling Mountain will take half an hour. It’s too late now, so I shall wait until tomorrow to pay it a visit.

“There is never enough time. The time limit for School of the Afterlife is almost up, but I don’t have an available Red Specter with me at the moment. That can’t be allowed to continue. I should visit the crew and, if possible, help the writer finish his wish as soon as possible. Hopefully, that’ll persuade the hotline operator to join my Haunted House.”

After everything was prepared, Chen Ge switched his phone off and, for the first time in a long time, slept early that day. At 8:30 am the next morning, Chen Ge was woken up by someone knocking on the window. He peeled open his eyes blurrily and heard Xiao Gu's voice coming from outside the window.

"Boss probably went out last night again. Let's wait at the door."

"Does boss go out late at night often?" It was Zhang Jingjiu who asked. He was quite curious about Chen Ge.

"I'll put it this way, the social app that we often use has a real-life pedometer, and whenever I arrive in the morning, boss will have logged around ten thousand steps already." Xiao Gu's tone was calm. "But today it's rather weird. Since last night until now, boss only logged in three thousand plus steps. I wonder if anything happened to him."

"If boss heard you say that, he would skin you alive." Xu Wan's voice followed. All the workers seemed to have arrived already.

"I would never physically injure my employees. I'm hurt that you even consider that possibility." Chen Ge crawled up in bed, pulled the thick curtains back, and opened the window. "At most I would only dock their pay."

"Boss!" The four stood next to the window—they seemed to have been waiting for a long time already.

"Wait a minute, I'll open the door for you." Chen Ge glanced at his phone; it was already 8:40 am. He had fallen to sleep so quickly that he forgot to set his alarm. Opening the Haunted House's gate, Chen Ge herded the four employees into the dressing room and helped them with their make-up one by one.

"Since you're all here, I wish to have a simple morning meeting while we do our make-up." Chen Ge expertly placed the make-up on his employees faces. One would suspect that he was not straight given the ease with which he wielded the many make-up brushes. "Xu Wan and Xiao Gu, you are both senior workers and are looking after the two scenarios aboveground. Our Haunted House is split into different star difficulties, and many visitors won't attempt the more difficult scenarios, so in a way, you have the most important responsibility because you represent the face of the Haunted House and will influence the visitors' first impression of us."

"Boss, don't worry, leave everything to me and Sister Xu Wan." Xiao Gu patted his chest and promised. His sunny disposition meant that he could befriend everyone easily.

"Scissors and Zhang Jingjiu, you two are responsibility for the underground scenario. I need you to focus on your given task. If there are any accidents with the visitors, inform me immediately." Chen Ge exchanged a look with Zhang Jingjiu and Scissors. "The underground scenarios are very big, so you two need to improve on your acting."

"Understood." Scissors and Zhang Jingjiu had entered Li Wan City with Chen Ge, so they knew what he left unsaid.

"One final thing, I will officially hand over the spare key for the Haunted House to Xu Wan. If there's a situation where I'm not around, just keep the place running with the responsibility that I've given you." Chen Ge handed the spare key to Xu Wan and looked at the girl in the mirror. "If there's any issue with

the scenario aboveground, come and ask Xu Wan. If Xu Wan cannot handle it, find theme park director, Director Luo. Do not go to anyone else, and do not trust anyone.”

Before Xu Wan answered, Chen Ge stood up. “I’ll handle the underground scenarios. Now, Scissors and Zhang Jingjiu, come with me, I still have many things to teach you.”

After Chen Ge and the two walked away, Xiao Gu noticed that Xu Wan was still spacing out looking at the mirror. “Sis, it’s time to go. The visitors will be arriving soon.”

“Hmm, okay.” Xu Wan held the key in her hand tightly like she was afraid that she might accidentally lose this very important object.

Chen Ge led Zhang Jingjiu and Scissors underground and stopped before one of the rooms at the underground morgue. He knocked on the door, and an old man wearing a white coat came out. He had a head full of white hair, but he had a straight back, like a pine growing on the cliff face.

“This old gentleman is Wei Jiuqin, he is our Haunted House’s best doctor. If I’m not around in the Haunted House and you come across a problem that you can’t resolve, come and find him, he will help you.” Doctor Wei was the oldest and had the most experience. There was no way to criticize his personality, and he was one of the few people in the Haunted House who could handle a crisis perfectly.

“Why are you suddenly bringing this up?” Doctor Wei felt like something was off.

“It’s nothing, just in case.”

“You have to tell me if you have anything worrying you! I am living quite comfortably here, especially given the chance to see my old friends and lecture them as I used to.” Doctor Wei was not one for jokes, but he lightened the mood for Chen Ge’s sake.

“Don’t worry.” Chen Ge returned to the surface. After the visitors filed into the scenarios, he led Scissors and Zhang Jingjiu for a spin underground and introduced them to most of the ghosts.

Scissors and Zhang Jingjiu’s lips were hanging open throughout their ‘tour’. There were students, teachers, doctors, patients, and other types of ‘people’ at this place; it was truly an underground town.

“What you see is merely a part of the underground scenario. This whole place is very huge. My parents used a decade to build this place.” Chen Ge shared more secrets with Scissors and Zhang Jingjiu before sending them back to Li Wan City.

“Only those who I’ve experienced life and death with am I going to allow to be my employees. They are going to be hard to recruit.” Chen Ge tried his best to cultivate Scissors and Zhang Jingjiu. When they were able to run the place on their own, he would have more time to go and do more things.

Exiting the scenario, Chen Ge was summoned by Uncle Xu when he walked to the Haunted House entrance. “Chen Ge, Director Luo is looking for you.”

“Looking for me?”

“Yes, be careful, there are outsiders in his company,” Uncle Xu reminded him in a whisper before turning to his duty. Chen Ge ran to the office building, and as he pushed the door open, the laughter hit

him immediately. Director Luo was in the middle of a joyous conversation with a middle-aged man. One would think that they were old friends from the way they seemed to enjoy each other's company.

"Xiao Chen, come and take a seat." Director Luo was friendly toward Chen Ge. He stood up and walked toward him. When he was facing away from the middle-aged man, he gestured with his hands, but he kept his voice upbeat. "This is CEO Bai. I've introduced you to him before. He has something that he wishes to ask you."

"CEO Bai?" Chen Ge understood immediately that this was not a friendly visit.

"There's no need to stand on ceremony—we've met each other a few times already after all. This time, I'm here on someone else's behalf, so I shall not talk in circles," CEO Bai said with a smile. "Earlier, people from a Haunted House from Xin Hai came to visit, and all of their employees were scared until they needed medical attention. Their boss is my friend, so he had me come over to ask a question.

"How did you manage to do that, Boss Chen?"

"Those are all professional Haunted House actors who have been in the business for at least five years. They are essentially the best that the market has to offer."

"CEO Bai, are you here because of that?" Chen Ge thought about it before turning to CEO Bai. "Perhaps they are not as good as they say. I personally don't think my Haunted House is that scary. The threshold for horror differs between people. How about you enter my Haunted House and see for yourself, CEO Bai?"

Chapter 709: No Longer Alone [3 in 1]

As permissible as CEO Bai tried to make himself out to be, when he heard the invitation extended by Chen Ge, even his face turned green. Chen Ge was never one for subtly and verbal confusion; he preferred to cut straight to the point.

If you think there is a problem with my Haunted House, at the very least, you will have to experience it once yourself first before you gain the right to give any criticism.

Naturally, CEO Bai would not agree to Chen Ge's proposition. *Are you kidding? Even professional Haunted House actors fainted after they went in for a visit. If I accept the invitation, won't that be an act of inviting death?*

"I have something else important to attend to later in the afternoon, but if there is a chance in the future, I will definitely take you up on that offer." CEO Bai chuckled awkwardly. After rejecting Chen Ge, his presence was no longer as aggressive as before.

"That is really too bad. If you are coming in the future, you will need to inform me first. I will assign you a VIP service." Chen Ge's Haunted House VIP service was truly a unique experience. A single visitor entering the 3.5-star scenario, the exploration of Li Wan City with the company of nine other visitors who were played by the Haunted House workers.

"Let's not talk about that for now." CEO Bai felt like if he stayed on this topic any longer, the situation would only turn against him. He fished his phone out from his pocket and dialed a number. "Xiao

Shuang, why don't you bring Changyin up here? It's going to be fine. Both Director Luo and Chen Ge are reasonable people; they will not do anything to you."

A few minutes later, the sound of footsteps came from outside the door. A pair of twins supported Lee Changyin as they entered Director Luo's office. Chen Ge had seen this group of people before; they were all employees from Nightmare Academy.

"This man looks rather familiar. If I am not mistaken, he has visited my Haunted House before." Chen Ge recognized Lee Changyin with just one glance. Lee Changyin did not dare to look straight at Chen Ge. With the accompaniment of the twins, he sat in the corner of the room.

"Changyin, tell Chen Ge what you saw inside the Haunted House." CEO Bai seemed to have regained control of the situation. Everyone in the room turned to look at Lee Changyin. His face was colored with panic. Once he was reminded of what happened that day, his body shook uncontrollably. Lifting his head, Lee Changyin sneaked a look at Chen Ge, and the fear at the bottom of his eyes was clear as day.

"It was him!" After exclaiming these three words that came out of nowhere, Lee Changyin's lips turned purple as he gasped hungrily for air. "Ghosts! There are ghosts inside the Haunted House! The place is haunted!"

"What is the meaning of this? Isn't it perfectly normal for a Haunted House to be haunted?" Chen Ge leaned against the sofa, and he sighed rather helplessly.

"But the place has actual ghosts! His Haunted House is actually haunted! The ghosts are all real! A living human would not have been able to create that kind of feeling!" Lee Changyin's mind slowly cleared, and his words gained a new kind of sharpness.

"Nightmare Academy might not be able to create that sensation, but it doesn't mean that other people cannot." Chen Ge was getting impatient. His tone did not get dyed with any disrespect, but his eyes that regarded Lee Changyin were how one would regard a piece of trash. "You should spend more time improving yourself instead of trying to bring other people down. Even if my Haunted House closes, the visitors will not go to your Haunted House."

"No! I can confirm that those things are not human beings! That is not an effect that is achievable by a living human!" Lee Changyin's eyes were red.

"I can understand what you're feeling. As a professional Haunted House actor, you wished to go to another Haunted House to create trouble, but in the end, you were the one who fainted. You've basically lost all of your pride, so that is why you have come up with this preposterous idea to try to salvage the little dignity that you have left." Chen Ge's analysis sounded logical and believable.

"I've been a Haunted House employee for five years, so I know more about Haunted Houses than you do. I understand very well where the ceiling of this industry lies..."

Lee Changyin wanted to say something else, but Chen Ge jumped in and cut him off. "Is five years really that long? My parents have started in the mobile Haunted House business a decade ago. I grew up holding the props of monsters and ghosts. When you are still naked, learning how to spell, I already knew how to set up a mannequin."

Chen Ge stood up. "I see no reason for the purpose of this meeting. The ceiling that you speak of is merely the ceiling in your worldview. In other words, that is your ceiling, not mine."

"There's no need to leave like that. Chen Ge, why don't you give me some face?" CEO Bai stood up directly. He felt like he had given Chen Ge plenty of face already. "Changyin is still young, and he doesn't know how to correctly phrase his words. How about this? Why don't you summon all the actors who were responsible for scaring him, and that should answer all the questions at once."

Chen Ge turned back to look at Director Luo. After exchanging a look, he stopped moving. "Changyin, you claim that my Haunted House has actual ghosts, then can you tell me in detail where you ran into this ghost and what kind of ghost it was?"

He walked toward Lee Changyin, narrowing his eyes. With every one of his steps, Lee Changyin would nudge one step backward until he was cornered behind the sofa.

"Are you that afraid of me? Is it because you think I am a ghost as well?" After completing so many Trial Missions given by the black phone, Chen Ge had cultivated a unique kind of presence around him.

"I cannot remember the other actors because my memory is a bit hazy, but there is a middle-aged man at the hotel that I remember very clearly! He is not a living person!" Lee Changyin hissed through his teeth. "Do you dare bring him here to face me in person?"

"At the hotel? A middle-aged man?" Chen Ge frowned. From the man's description, he seemed to be talking about Zhang Jingjiu. But the problem was... why would the man be so certain that Zhang Jingjiu was a ghost? As a newcomer, Zhang Jingjiu was sometimes scared by Chen Ge, so how did he manage to create the impression that he was a ghost?

What kind of conspiracy is this? Chen Ge could not understand it.

"You don't have the guts, right? Because there is no such person at your Haunted House! Am I right?" Lee Changyin yelled with fiery eyes. The man's brain had developed in a way that was different from normal people, and his way of thinking often leaned toward the extreme. "Don't think you can grab a random person to replace him; I have his picture here with me!"

With shaking hands, Lee Changyin took out his phone from his pocket. He clicked to the photo album where he pulled out a picture of Zhang Jingjiu. This picture had been taken by Lee Changyin when he was in the pregnant woman costume before he interacted with Zhang Jingjiu.

"Cat got your tongue? Why are you hesitating? This picture is very clear. I need you to bring this person here immediately!" Lee Changyin believed that he had come fully prepared. He was thankful that he had taken that picture beforehand. Unfortunately, he only had the picture of Zhang Jingjiu. After that, he ran in such a hurry that it did not even cross his mind to take pictures for evidence.

"You said yourself, you've worked at a Haunted House for five years already. You should know that it is against the rules to take pictures inside a Haunted House. I will keep this picture, and in a few days, I shall pay Nightmare Academy a person visit to ask for an explanation." Seeing the picture, Chen Ge felt relief instead.

"Don't try to change the subject!" Lee Changyin raised his voice, insisting on his view. He had to be correct.

“Wait here then.” Chen Ge turned and left Director Luo’s office. He went back to the Haunted House to get Zhang Jingjiu, who was still brushing up on his acting knowledge.

“Bring the bottle of make-up remover, we are going to meet an old friend.” Chen Ge gave Zhang Jingjiu a summary on the way there, and the latter grasped everything almost instantly. Knocking on the door, Chen Ge brought Zhang Jingjiu into Director Luo’s office, and when they stepped into it, the temperature in the room seemed to have dropped.

“This is the actor in the picture, Zhang Jingjiu.” Everyone turned to Zhang Jingjiu, who had Chen Ge’s make-up on. Even if they were standing inside a bright office, meeting his eyes was still a very scary experience.

“I’m so sorry for having scared you that day. I did not expect you to be so cowardly. I apologize deeply for it.” Zhang Jingjiu walked toward Lee Changyin, but once the latter saw him approach, he screamed like a girl and jumped away.

“No! Stay away! This is it! He is a ghost! He really is a ghost!”

“Ignore him.” Chen Ge passed the bottle of make-up remover to Zhang Jingjiu. “Remove your make-up now. Later, I will reapply it for you.”

“Okay.” And so, Zhang Jingjiu did what he was told. After removing the jacket, he immediately turned into a different person. There was nothing scary about him; he looked just like the office worker one would meet on a daily commute.

“Don’t the actors at Nightmare Academy use make-up?” Zhang Jingjiu placed the bottle of make-up remover before the three workers from Nightmare Academy.

With the truth placed before their eyes, the pair of twins quickly stood up to apologize. “We are so sorry. Your Haunted House’s make-up is truly amazing. We have acted too recklessly, we’re so sorry.”

“There’s no need to apologize. I am sure there are plenty of things that we can learn from each other. I promise to pay Nightmare Academy a visit sooner or later.”

The workers from Nightmare Academy could sense the anger radiating from Chen Ge. After they gave their profuse apology, they slipped away as fast as they could. CEO Bai appeared rather awkward and embarrassed sitting there, but he tried to maintain his composure.

“Xiao Chen, that’s everything for now, so you can go back.” Director Luo’s face was filled with a satisfied smile. He seemed to have many things that he wished to ‘discuss’ with CEO Bai.

“Okay.” Chen Ge knew that Director Luo was about to slaughter CEO Bai, but neither of them talked about it. On the way back, Chen Ge noticed that Zhang Jingjiu had his head lowered like there was something on his mind.

“Jingjiu, if you have anything on your mind, just say it. We’ve been through life and death together, so you can tell me anything.” Chen Ge’s voice was warm. He was able to give other people energy even if he did not intend to do so.

“Have I created a problem for you again? I feel so useless somehow. I am not good at scaring visitors and have lowered the overall standard of our Haunted House. This time, I’ve even created this huge

issue for you.” Zhang Jingjiu sounded bitter. “Ever since I was young, I’ve always been a problem for my family. Due to the issue with my mother, I directed all my dissatisfaction to my father, believing it to be his fault. But now, I see that it was merely a convenient way for me to shy away from the blame. In retrospect, I was being a very horrible person and son.”

“For these past few days, I’ve been watching you inside the Haunted House. You have been studying very hard, but I feel like there is something holding you back. You give me the impression that you’ve trapped yourself inside a small cage.”

Standing at the office building, Chen Ge looked out the window. His eyes scanned the entire theme park.

“Everyone has their moment of weakness and loss, but everyone has their own unique charm as well. Now, what you need to do is unlock the shackle in your heart and release your real self. When the time comes, you should return to Xin Hai to meet your father. Certain things are better not left unsaid. You’ll feel much better later.”

Chen Ge patted Zhang Jingjiu’s shoulder. “Try to look up. The only employees that I can rely on are the few of you. In the future, I plan to have you open a branch for me in a different city, and then you’ll be required to take control of many things.”

“Thank you.”

“There is no need to thank me; I have a small number of employees, and I treat everyone as my family.” Chen Ge led Zhang Jingjiu back to the Haunted House. He had Zhang Jingjiu return to his role as the hotel owner while he went back to the staff breakroom to find more information about Left Oculus. He planned to make his move that night.

“The time limit for School of Afterlife will end after tomorrow. Whether Zhang Ya awakens then or not, I will have to go take a look at this mission, or else all the previous missions will have been wasted.” Chen Ge stared at his own shadow and dozed off. Then he picked up the calendar on the table. “Today is the 1st of June. The holiday season is coming, and the futuristic theme park is opening soon. I really don’t have much time left.”

Zhang Ya was hibernating, and Xu Yin was seriously injured; it would be very dangerous for him to challenge the four-star mission School of the Afterlife. Chen Ge understood all that, but he did not have a choice. If he gave up on the School of Afterlife, he had much to lose.

“I shall go take a look. Hopefully, I will return alive.” His eyes went to the picture on the corner of his table, and Chen Ge shook his head lightly. It was a family photo. His parents stood in the middle—his mother appeared to be hugging something, his father pointed at the Haunted House behind him with a bright smile on his face, and Chen Ge stood alone to the side.

Narrowing his eyes, Chen Ge could see that his mother was hugging Director Luo’s daughter, the spirit who was no different from a guardian angel.

“For some reason, it feels like I’m not their biological son.” Chen Ge replaced the picture on the table, and he accidentally caught the sentence written on the back of the picture. ‘1st June, happy birthday, you little bugger.’

“The pair of parents who managed to make themselves disappear, now who is the real bugger?” Chen Ge sighed and rearranged his emotions to throw himself back into work.

During lunch, Chen Ge gave the four workers a break while he stayed behind to take up their responsibility. Half an hour later, four of them returned. They whispered among themselves like they were discussing something.

“All of you are late by a whole four minutes. There will be no next time, or I will dock your pay,” Chen Ge warned them with a severe tone. Hearing that, they quickly ran back to their assigned posts.

“Looks like I will need to be more stringent with them normally.” Chen Ge returned to the staff breakroom to arrange his information. Then, he came up with a list of all the employees that he could bring with him. The crew of the Left Oculus was a trial; the real test was the School of Afterlife.

After giving it some thought, Chen Ge came up with a more reasonable plan of action. When he exited the staff breakroom, the sun was already setting. The theme park closed at 6 pm. After sending away the last batch of visitors, Chen Ge closed the gates.

“Thank you for your hard work today, you can go home now.” Chen Ge had something else to do, so he urged for his workers to leave.

“Boss, are you planning on going out again tonight?” Xiao Gu seemed to have read Chen Ge’s mind.

“You’re not going to understand even if I explain it to you. In any case, it is about work.” Chen Ge hurried for them to leave. Scissors and Zhang Jingjiu did not think much about it. Xu Wan appeared like she wanted to say something, but she did not voice it.

The setting sun burnished the Ferris Wheel. The sound of laughter faded away, and Chen Ge stood at the entrance alone. He studied the theme park around him for a while before turning back to the Haunted House. “It’s time to move after the sky has fully darkened.”

Returning to the staff breakroom, Chen Ge lay in his bed. His eyes kept wandering to the picture on the table; this was the first birthday that he would spend without his parents.

“Shall I go buy myself a cake? Nah, the money spent on the cake is enough for me to buy half a mannequin.” Chen Ge patted his own face and stretched lazily before reaching under his bed. “Where is my backpack? Did the cat drag it away?”

Chen Ge looked below his bed; there was no backpack. Even Xiaoxiao and the white cat were missing.

“This cat has grown much smarter now! It sensed that I am about to bring it out with me, so it hid the backpack from me.” Other than Chen Ge, only white cat and Xiaoxiao would enter the staff breakroom, so Chen Ge’s suspicion landed on the cat immediately. Holding a pack of cat food, Chen Ge opened the door and ran all over the Haunted House’s aboveground scenarios, but he failed to find the white cat.

“Has it run underground? It dares to go there alone when it’s so easily scared?” Pushing open the iron gate that led underground, Chen Ge stepped into the tunnel that seemed to lead into the darkness. He only took a few steps when he sensed that something was wrong. The place was a bit too quiet.

“Xiaoxiao? Ol’ Zhou?” He called a few workers’ names, but there was no response. Chen Ge walked down the dim street alone. Dim, dark, depressing, and narrow, it was like the route that Chen Ge had chosen for his life. There was no light around him, and he strode into the darkness on his own.

He walked past the broken windows that provided glimpses of the different scary scenarios. Behind him was a world of darkness, and before him was an abyss of darkness.

Walking past the empty classrooms, Chen Ge finally stopped at first junction inside the Mu Yang High School scenario. He stood there alone, studying the split in the road. Just as he was deciding which turn to take, his phone suddenly vibrated.

Taking it out, he opened the message to take a look. It was a message from Tong Tong. “Boss, Happy Birthday!”

Before Chen Ge knew what was happening, the split that he was standing at was lit up by a host of spiritual fire. With a resounding boom, the bathroom door next to him was shoved open, and a group of student mannequins squeezed out holding a blackboard!

The blackboard of the sealed classroom had been taken off its hinges, and a picture had been drawn on it. It was a picture of a bunch of small figures dancing about. They had different expressions and postures, and standing in the middle of them was a man dragging an iron hammer.

Perhaps they had limited drawing skills—they were unable to fully represent the man in the middle. Instead, they wrote down many nouns around him, terms like sunny, righteous, kind, gentle, and all of them had arrows that pointed to the man in the middle. After they saw Chen Ge, they turned around at the same time, wishing to show him the other side of the blackboard.

They were unable to coordinate perfectly, so some of the mannequins had their arms and necks turned 180 degrees. They maintained this strange posture and showed him the other side of the blackboard which said—“Happy birthday!”

The two words were colored in with chalk. The students of Mu Yang High School smiled at him with their strange smiles. Some of them wanted to get close to Chen Ge, but others thought that the work was better appreciated from a distance, so they stayed put. Due to the difference in opinion, the group of mannequins soon collapsed on top of each other, but their intention and hard work was clearly understood.

A dry cough came from the left corridor. The ghost fire switched off in the other lanes, and only the ones in the left corridor remained. Harrowing singing came from deep inside the scenario. It was intermingled with scary laughter and the sound of static. The doctors from the underground morgue were slowly pushing out a trolley.

“Happy birthday to you, happy birthday to you...”

The trolley was filled with birthday cards, all made from different materials. Some were made from patient’s records, others were promotional flyers, and some were directly yanked out from clothes and bedsheets. Even though the materials were all different, most of the handwriting was the same. The Pen Spirit probably had helped most of them write their well wishes.

In the middle of the trolley sat an object about four tiers tall, constructed from models and clay. It looked like a cake.

The edges of the cakes were decorated with very unique icing. Only the extremely talented Yan Danian had the ability to make cake icing look like flowing blood.

“Chen Ge, happy birthday.” The few doctors placed the trolley before Chen Ge. Yan Danian, Ol’ Zhou, and the rest walked out from behind the trolley. Bai Qiulin had a recorder in his palm, and the bloodied tape inside was playing a soft, cheerful tune.

“You...” Chen Ge looked at all the ‘people’ before him.

“Shush, don’t speak. Light the candles and make your wish.” Wei Jiuqin waved behind him, and a white cat that was much larger than a normal cat walked out from the classroom, biting a backpack in its mouth. It returned the backpack to Chen Ge. Opening the backpack, he saw Xiaoxiao hugging a pack of candles that were wrapped in paper.

“So, you’re here.” Chen Ge picked Xiaoxiao out and placed her on his shoulder. Holding the few handmade candles in his hands, he said, “Who told you it is my birthday today?”

“It’s the guys that you had us meet this morning. They said that it was a female employee who told them about it.”

“Understood.” Chen Ge nodded. He turned to the ‘candles’ in his palm. “Must I light them?”

“Of course, there is a ceremony to life. You light up the number of candles that correspond to your age, or your wish won’t come true,” Elder Wei said strictly. Chen Ge nodded. He took out the lighter from his backpack, lit up the candles one by one, and placed them on the model cake. The warm light chased away the cold. Ghosts were most afraid of light and fire, but none of them shied away.

“Boss, it’s time to make your wish!”

“Make a wish! Make a wish!”

“What kind of wish do you think the boss will make?”

“Shush, if he tells us, the wish won’t come true anymore.”

He scanned the faces of his workers, and Chen Ge rubbed his eyes. He voiced his wish silently and then proceeded to blow out all the candles. The underground scenarios returned to darkness, but the silence was shattered. All the employees were gathered together; some were singing, and some were laughing, like a real family.

“Thank you.” Standing in the dark, even though Chen Ge was the only living human in the Haunted House, he did not feel alone at all. Kindness and grace would never be vanquished by a scary exterior.

He saw in these ‘people’ sincerity that was not valued much by human beings these days, pride that made them stand tall, and kindness that was etched into their souls.

“It is my good fortune to have been able to encounter all of you.”

The party continued into the night. It was not until midnight that Chen Ge realized that he had something important to do. He grabbed the backpack and shoved the white cat inside it before it realized what was happening. "Come, the night is only starting now. For the next phase, we're taking this outside!"

...

Walking out from the underground, Chen Ge carried the heavy backpack and returned to the staff breakroom.

When he opened the door, he was briefly stunned.

There was an actual cake left on his table, and next to it sat a greeting card and a key.

Chen Ge walked to pick up the card. It was written with Xu Wan's graceful handwriting. "Boss, I don't think I need this spare key because I trust that you will always be around. I shall hand this key back to you, and finally, I want to wish you a happy birthday! Remember to live every day with joy!"

Chapter 710: Birthday Cake

Putting down the greeting card, Chen Ge picked up the key from the table and studied it quietly. After his parents disappeared, the visitors that came to the Haunted House gradually dwindled, causing the Haunted House to face the threat of closing down. At that extremely dangerous time, Xu Wan had chosen to stay behind. She was the only employee who was recruited by Chen Ge's parents and chose to remain until the end.

"Is it possible that the girl has sensed something?" Chen Ge put the key away and opened the cake box. Compared to the box that it came in, the cake inside could only be described as an unmitigated disaster. The middle part was sinking, and there were black spots from leaving it in the oven for too long. The whole thing looked so wobbly that it might crumble with a touch.

But one could see how attentive the baker was. She used cream to evenly slather the cake's surface to try to cover up the flaws. During this process, the cake probably crumbled once, so the cream acted as both the decoration and the glue holding the whole thing together. It seeped deep into the cake. Just looking at this cake, the image of Xu Wan baking it appeared in Chen Ge's mind.

"No wonder she is my employee. Even baking a cake can be made into such a horrifying experience." Picking up the knife inside the box, Chen Ge cut out a small piece and took a bite. "Hmm, the texture is horrendous, too hard on the outside, and the inside appears to be undercooked. It sticks to the teeth, and it's so oily. As I suspected, this would benefit from a longer time in the oven with a lower temperature so that the outside wouldn't be charred, and the inside would be cooked. Wait a minute, she used bread flour? Doesn't she know baking a cake requires cake flour?"

Even though Chen Ge kept criticizing it, he still finished almost half the cake in record time. Seeing how much Chen Ge was enjoying himself, the white cat was curious, but as it poked its head toward the cake, it was shoved back into the backpack. "Cream is not good for you. When it's your birthday, I'll make you a cat food cake instead."

Ignoring the cat's protest, Chen Ge wiped his lips, lugged the backpack, and left the staff breakroom. The birthday party took up some time, but that did not cut into Chen Ge's plan for the night too much. He had already searched for everything that he could on Left Oculus, and he planned to go take a look that night.

Leaving New Century Park, Chen Ge waited at the roadside for a long time, but no taxi passed. The taxi drivers in Jiujiang seemed to have come to a consensus—do not approach New Century Park after midnight, and do not pick up any passengers from that place.

"Unfortunately, my bus is now stuck behind the door in Li Wan City."

After walking two more streets, Chen Ge finally encountered a taxi. After he got into the car, he gave the address. "Sir, I want to go to Yong Ling Mountain's bungalow."

"Yong Ling Mountain?" The driver was briefly confused. "There's a bungalow there?"

"Why don't you open the GPS to take a look?" Chen Ge was not sure either—that was simply what the internet said.

"What is the full name of the location?" The driver keyed in the term Yong Ling Mountain, but the GPS did not show any place that resembled Yong Ling Mountain Bungalow.

"The full name..." Chen Ge narrowed his eyes. He focused on the few names that appeared on the GPS—Yong Ling Mountain Petrol Station, Yong Ling Mountain Flower Market, Yong Ling Mountain Holiday Villa. "Then we'll go to Yong Ling Mountain Holiday Villa."

"Huh? Your destination is decided so casually?" The driver glanced at Chen Ge through the rearview mirror. He felt like Chen Ge look quite familiar, and the ghost stories that had been making its way through his colleagues entered his mind. The engine started, and they drove for half an hour before the light of the city faded away. There was a large shadow at the end of the road, and that would be Western Jiujiang's Yong Ling Mountain.

According to the GPS, the taxi should be arriving at the destination soon. The driver gripped the steering wheel tightly. A few times, he opened his mouth to chat with Chen Ge, but every time, he gave up at the last minute. He did not really know why—perhaps the man in the back appeared much too unapproachable.

After the taxi climbed the mountain, the lights around them disappeared completely. People would rarely go to that place at night, so the place was deserted. After driving for another five minutes, the GPS app on the driver's phone said, "We've arrived at the destination."

The car parked by the road, and there was only darkness around them. One could see the blurry shadows of branches swaying in the dark and the rustle of the leaves as the wind blew. The driver's hands that held the steering wheel were drenched in sweat, and his face was pale. This 'journey' had not been enjoyable for him at all.

"We're here. The GPS says that this place is Yong Ling Mountain Holiday Villa." The driver turned his head awkwardly around to look at Chen Ge. His eyelids kept twitching; he was afraid that this suspicious character in the backseat would suddenly pull out a weapon to take over his car.

“This is the holiday villa? There’s not even a building around; it is a complete wasteland.” With his Yin Yang Vision, Chen Ge could see through the darkness. He realized that they were surrounded by woods. “Are you sure that you are not lying to me? You drove me to middle of nowhere in the middle of the night?”

“Why are you doubting me? Boss, I was just following the GPS!” The driver turned all the lights on, but the light still could not banish the fear in his heart.

“Okay then.” Chen Ge paid his fare, grabbed his backpack, and got out of the taxi. He activated the flashlight on his phone. He walked down the road and saw a small path that was overgrown with bushes cutting through the forest. “I need to go in deeper, do I? Is Yong Ling Mountain Holiday Villa inside there? How come it feels like the place has been abandoned for a long time already?”

Chen Ge turned back, wishing to ask the driver about it. But when he turned, he saw the driver already turning the car around and speeding down the mountain with his foot firmly on the gas pedal.

“Is this place that scary?”

Unable to rely on others, Chen Ge had to trust in himself. He raised his phone and walked down the path. He trekked for a few minutes before his sight opened up. Chen Ge was greeted by a line of low walls and a few buildings with strange architecture.

“The holiday villa? Who would come here for their holiday? This place looks more like my Haunted House than anything.” Holiday was for relaxation, not a heart attack. The more Chen Ge walked toward the place, the more confused he became.

“The location is recorded on the GPS, but it feels like this place has been forgotten by the locals for a long time. I wonder if it’s still open for business.” The road was filled with holes and cracks. The trees on the sides were wild and slanted; they desperately needed a good trim.

The walls were overgrown with vines, and they covered up the words on the wall. Chen Ge explored for a long time before he found the entrance to the villa about ten meters away. On the rusted iron gate hung a sign that said no entry, and next to it was a dark-brown, wooden mailbox.

“Do people still use mailboxes these days?” The wooden sign and mailbox were both handmade. Their craftsmanship was rough and did not match the overall style of the place at all.

“The words on the signs can be read easily, and the iron wires that hold it to the gate aren’t rusted. So, these should be new.” Chen Ge tried to push the iron gate. The hinge creaked noisily, and as he pushed harder, the iron gates fell away under his force.