

Horrors 71

Chapter 71: Heaven Inside the Well

The afternoon sun was rather blinding. Even after the woman was rejected firmly by Chen Ge, she and the boy refused to leave.

"It is his wish to visit your Haunted House, and I promised that he could. Can you please show some kindness?" The woman pulled out a 100 note from her purse. "I promise you, it'll be fine."

Chen Ge did not accept the obvious bribe but asked confusedly, "Why do you insist on entering the Haunted House? The boy is at most eight years old—the environment inside the Haunted House is so complicated that I'm afraid it might scar him for life."

The woman smiled helplessly but did not answer Chen Ge's question. Instead, she turned around to rub the boy's fluffy hair. "Fan Yu, shall we go play something else..."

Before she could finish, the boy slapped her hand away. The boy did not like physical contact, even from his family member. No matter how the woman tried to persuade him, the boy stood unmoving at the front of the Haunted House. Occasionally, he might raise his head, and Chen Ge could see fear, inferiority, and a trace of detachment in his eyes.

"Fan Yu?" Chen Ge's attention had completely shifted to the boy. This was the first time he had come across such a curious child before. He squatted down to the boy's level. "Can you please tell me why you want to visit the Haunted House? It is very dark inside the building, and there are scary things."

The boy averted his eyes, but Chen Ge noticed his gaze kept wandering toward Chen Ge's shadow. He still had not said a word.

The woman was probably afraid that Chen Ge might get offended, so she instantly jumped out to say, "Xiao Yu is different from most children—he doesn't like to talk—so I hope you don't mind."

"Of course." Chen Ge realized these two were not going to move unless tossed out by the guards. He wasn't so cruel as to do that to a woman and a child, so he relented. "How about this? I will let you enter the building for free, but you are only allowed to visit the outer perimeter, and I will be tagging along."

"Thank you!"

"Sign the disclaimer agreements first, both adult and child. Please do not touch any of the props or run amok while you're inside. Stay close behind me." Chen Ge gave the two documents to the woman and the boy. Normally, he only needed the signature from the guardian, but to get as much information as he could from the boy, Chen Ge asked for the boy's signature as well. After signing the agreement, Chen Ge led them into the Minghun scenario.

Chen Ge explained the story background to them. The trio stood at the entrance, which was decorated with white lantern. The woman was a bit nervous, observable from the way she gripped her purse. The boy had his head lowered, but it was unknown whether from fear or something else.

The dead trees swayed in the wind, and the paper money that littered the floor scrunched under their footsteps. Chen Ge pushed open the entrance to the Siheyuan and explained, "That is what the interior looks like. Remember not to go in. The park has strict rules that prevent children under the age of fourteen from experiencing the Haunted House."

As he finished, the little boy, who had been extremely quiet, suddenly rushed into the Siheyuan before the two adults could even stop him.

"Fan Yu!" The woman ran after him alongside Chen Ge. The boy stopped at the old well inside the courtyard. He had half of his upper body leaning down the well as if he was looking for something.

"I'm sorry, I'm so sorry." The woman apologized profusely to Chen Ge as she tried to yank the boy out from the well. However, the shy boy seemed to have changed into another person. He not only tried his best to swat the woman's hands away, but in his desperation, his nails clawed her arms until they were bloodied. It appeared like he had gone berserk.

"The boy sure has some huge mood swings." The well in the Siheyuan was just a prop; it was not even that deep, so Chen Ge was not worried for the child's safety. He was, however, curious about why the boy was so interested in the well.

After three more minutes at the well, the boy released his grasp unwillingly, probably because he did not find what he was looking for. The boy was definitely different from most young boys—he was more excitable at places that were dark and sinister.

"Since you're already inside, then I suppose a little tour won't hurt." Chen Ge's attention was fully focused on the boy. Even among his peers, the boy was of a smaller stature. He had delicate features and large eyes that looked like pure ebony.

"The Minghun scenario is modelled after the traditional Siheyuan, and the East and West Houses are normally meant for the newer generations." He pushed open the door to the East House, and a female ghost in bridal outfit floated out from behind the door without warning. The woman screamed from shock and staggered back hurriedly.

"Don't worry, it's just an actor." Chen Ge stopped the bride and whispered, "Xu Wan, go take a break for now."

"Boss, couldn't you at least pretend that you're scared. Such a buzzkill..." Xu Wan picked up the dress and stepped over the wooden threshold. The boy who was behind Chen Ge rushed forward to stand before Xu Wan and tilted his head up to look closely at Xu Wan.

"Hmm? Boss, why did you let such a small boy in?" Xu Wan was surprised, but only Chen Ge realized how weird this was. The bridal outfit was red as blood, and Xu Wan was in her special make-up. She looked like a dead person. In such a circumstance, the boy did not feel fear but moved forward actively to Xu Wan to take a closer look.

"The kid seems to like me." Xu Wan smiled at Chen Ge. It was not until Xu Wan left the scenario that the boy pulled his gaze back.

"I suppose that's enough touring for one day. The rest of the place has similar décor, so shall we leave now?" Chen Ge and the woman moved toward the exit, but the boy stopped in the courtyard. He looked left and right as if looking for something.

"Fan Yu, it's time to go!"

The boy ignored the woman. He moved back to the old well and continued his search.

"Isn't the boy afraid?" Chen Ge did not rush them but started chatting with the woman. "Are you his mother?"

"No, I'm his aunt. I'm sorry for creating so much trouble. Xiao Yu is a bit different from boys his age. Ever since the accident with his parents several years ago, he has been like this. We've been to many doctors, but it was to no avail."

"Psychological problems? If you don't mind me asking, what happened to his parents?" Chen Ge asked cautiously.

"Xiao Yu's parents were both teachers at Mu Yang High School. They disappeared one day and have not been found since. At the time, Xiao Yu was only five. I didn't how to explain it to him, so I could only lie to him and say that his parents left for some place far away called heaven."

"Mu Yang High School?" Chen Ge tensed after hearing these four words.

"You've heard of it? There are plenty of rumors about that school. I advised Xiao Yu's parents from the beginning to seek employment elsewhere, but they refused to listen to me." The woman's eyes started to redden from the memory. She stopped talking to Chen Ge and walked toward the boy. "Xiao Yu, it's time to go home."

The boy stayed stubbornly beside the well. This made Chen Ge even more curious. He squatted down beside the boy and asked, "Why do you keep looking inside the well? Is there some kind of monster living down there?"

Fan Yu shook his head. The boy seemed to have let his guard down, standing at the corner that was shaded from the sun.

"Then can you tell me why you don't want to leave the well?"

The boy glanced at a spot behind Chen Ge before answering, "I'm looking for something."

"What are you looking for?" Chen Ge was curious.

The boy looked down the dark well for a long time before answering, "Heaven."

Chapter 72: Two-Star Scenario!

"Looking for heaven inside the well?" Chen Ge looked at the boy and was suddenly reminded of something. His emotions were running wild. He turned around to take a deep breath to calm himself down. Thankfully, the woman did not notice his weird reaction.

However, as he turned back around, he lowered his head and saw the boy has been staring at her, the glow in his eyes similar to earlier when he saw Xu Wan in Mortician's Make-up.

"Fan Yu, it's time to go home," the woman repeated. Finally, the boy moved away from the well. Even though he still had his head lowered, his mood seemed to have improved.

However, after they exited the Haunted House and the sunlight fell on the party, the boy returned to how he had been before, silent with an unbridled fear circulating in his eyes. It was hard to tell whether he was afraid of light or living humans.

The woman thanked Chen Ge before leading the boy away. After the pair left New Century Park, Chen Ge sighed in relief. The black phone in his pocket vibrated. He sat on the steps as he thought back on what had happened earlier.

Looking for heaven inside the well... perhaps for the boy, this was not meant in a metaphorical manner. After conversing with the woman, Chen Ge knew she had lied to the boy by saying that his parents had gone to somewhere called heaven so that he would not be too sad.

She had probably hoped that the boy would come to the realization as he grew up, but things did not go as planned. The boy's psychological health was stunted—he could no longer be considered a normal young boy. However, the thing that surprised Chen Ge the most was the boy's answer when he asked what he was doing beside the well.

His parents had gone to heaven and the boy kept on searching for heaven inside the well. Did this not prove indirectly that the boy had seen his parents shoved into the well with his own eyes ?

Their bodies are inside the well! Chen Ge lit a cigarette unknowingly. He did not hurry to call the police but continued his line of speculation.

The boy's parents were both teachers at Mu Yang High School, and one of the side quests activated on the black phone is related to both Mu Yang High School and a well. If this is not a coincidence, then the disappearance of the boy's parents should be related to Mu Yang High School.

Chen Ge took out the black phone, and there was an unread message. He opened it.

"Different choices lead to different result. The first special visitor has left. You made the correct choice during the visitation period. Congratulations for obtaining the reward! Unlocked Hidden Trial Mission—Mu Yang High School! This mission is part of the four-star scenario, School of the Afterlife's side mission. Completing it will unlock a two-star scenario, Mu Yang High School, and lower the Trial Mission difficulty for School of the Afterlife.

"Mu Yang High School Trial Mission (Scream Factor 2 Stars): This scenario has four side missions. Survive after experiencing all of them, and the scenario will be unlocked.

"Mission Venue: Mu Yang High School.

"Mission Request: Arrive at the mission venue before 11 pm tonight and survive until dawn.

"Mission Hint: Everyone has a deep well inside their heart where shameful and unknowable secrets stay buried.

“Do you wish to accept the mission?”

“Warning: Trial Mission is only active for 24 hours. If you do not accept it within 24 hours, you will forfeit the mission, and the scenario will forever be locked.”

The message on the black phone flustered Chen Ge. He did not expect the reward for accepting a special visitor would be the unlocking of a two-star scenario’s Trial Mission. He had already experienced the terror of a Trial Mission at Ping An Apartments. It was much more dangerous than a Nightmare Mission, and Ping An Apartments was merely a one star Trial Mission.

Chen Ge memorized all the information on the screen as he looked through the black phone again and again.

The previous mission required me to find the murderer while this mission only requires me to stay alive until dawn. It looks simpler in comparison, but the black phone must have its reasons to label this a two-star mission; its level of danger has to be higher than Murder by Midnight’s Trial Mission!

To survive, it sounded like a simple demand, but it greatly unsettled Chen Ge. The offer of the Trial Mission would be open only for 24 hours, and this was a great point of contention for Chen Ge. He did not know if surrendering this mission would affect the development of the four-star scenario, School of the Afterlife.

Even though based on his current situation, unlocking a four-star scenario was practically impossible, he would still feel pain if he had to surrender it.

Forfeiting this mission might mean forfeiting School of the Afterlife. Two losses at once is indeed too big a loss. Chen Ge measured the pros and cons in his heart. Not accepting it means losing two scenarios, but if I manage to complete the mission, it means unlocking a two-star scenario, and it will also complete the side missions for School of the Afterlife. The Haunted House requires constant updates to retain the repeat visitors. This two-star scenario comes at the right time, so I should give it a try.

New Century Park was facing closure, and he needed to create results within three months, something that was impossible with the current Haunted House. After some thought, Chen Ge decided to accept the mission.

After the message disappeared, Chen Ge decided not to waste any more time. He called Xu Wan to inform her to look after the Haunted House for the rest of the day because he had to go somewhere else.

The boy was the key that activated the Trial Mission for Mu Yang High School, and Chen Ge believed he would be able to get more information from him. Chen Ge ran out the park entrance and saw the boy and the woman get on a bus.

Route 14.

Chen Ge hailed a cab and told the driver, “Go to the next stop for Route 14.”

The taxi reached the station arrived earlier than the bus, which arrived one minute later. The bus was crowded, and the woman was holding the boy in her arms as they were squeezed to the back of the bus. They did not discover Chen Ge.

Following them home might nab me some surprise discoveries.

Chen Ge did not hurry to expose himself but stood at the front of the bus. The bus continued to pass seven stations, and many passengers descended as the surroundings outside the bus became more and more deserted.

When they almost reached the final station, the woman and the boy finally got off. They did not walk down the street but turned down a small, secluded path.

They live at such a secluded place? Then again, the woman did mention finding many doctors for the boy—that would burn a hole in the family finances.

Chen Ge trailed behind them. A short distance later, the woman and the boy suddenly increased in pace.

Have I been discovered? Or are they hiding from something else?

Chapter 73: Red and Black

The dilapidated paths crisscrossed like a maze. Afraid of being left behind, Chen Ge also picked up the pace. After many turns, a squat two-story terrace block appeared before his eyes, and it was into this place that the woman and the boy disappeared.

The drains surrounding the building were fetid with a horrible stench, and a large poster stating that the original tenants had moved was pasted on the first floor. Everywhere Chen Ge turned, there was rubbish piling up either at the corner or directly on the floor.

Chen Ge walked toward the building, and many questions floated up his mind. The pair lived in such a horrible environment, so this meant that their living conditions were too good. However, at the park, the woman readily pulled out 100 RMB just for the boy to visit the Haunted House. This went to show how much she cared for the boy. Yet, the boy was cruelly indifferent to her. He had said only two phrases while he was inside the Haunted House, and they were both directed at Chen Ge. The boy seemed to dislike the woman vehemently.

Is it because of his mental issues, or is something more sinister at work?

After walking up the stairs, Chen Ge realized there was only one tenant residing on the second floor. The corridor was swept clean, and there was laundry hanging on poles.

“Is anyone in?” The door was open, but Chen Ge still knocked on the door out of courtesy.

“Coming.”

Footsteps could be heard coming from inside the room. When she saw Chen Ge, she was visibly stunned.

“Why are you here? Did we cause some damage when we visited the Haunted House?” the woman asked cautiously.

"No, it's not that. I'm just interested in the little boy's situation, and I have something to ask him." Chen Ge realized the woman did not show any sign of wanting him inside the house so he continued. "I have some friends at Jiujiang Medical University, and I thought, maybe they can help."

"Thank you, but it's alright." The woman rejected him without thought. Then again, Chen Ge also felt like he was being a little too forward. "I am really not a bad person. You can look on your phone for today's Jiujiang Morning News."

Since the woman did not move, Chen Ge took out his own phone to look for an article on him helping to solve the Ping An Apartment case.

"Look, I've once helped the police solve a buried case and was awarded a medal of honor." Chen Ge passed the phone to the woman, and she took a glance at it. "Supernatural Livestreamer trapped and was finally saved by the police? The intrepidity of a Haunted House operator almost caused his death?"

"Ignore the headlines. There should be my picture inside the article."

Chen Ge explained for a long time before the woman put her suspicion aside. She returned his phone to him and said, "Come in for a seat then, just leave the door open."

"Okay."

The woman led Chen Ge to the 'living room', which was more like a thirty square feet space that had a dining table and beds pushed to the corners.

"Forgive the mess, I wasn't expecting any visitors. Would you like to have something to drink?" The woman was embarrassed. In that moment, Chen Ge could see the boy's shadow on her.

"That won't be necessary. I just want to ask some questions about the boy's parents." Chen Ge took out his phone to record anything he deemed important.

"It has been so long already, why are you asking that now?" Regardless, the woman sat down across from Chen Ge and told him everything that had happened at Mu Yang High School three years ago.

Three years ago, Mu Yang High School had still been a normal school. That summer day, it had poured down with rain. When the boy's parents returned home, the boy had been nowhere to be found. They had gone out to search for him, but in the end, it was the boy who had returned and not them.

This sounds like the reason for the parents' disappearance is also because of the boy... Chen Ge recorded the key points that was given by the woman on his phone. He tried his best to recreate the event.

Fan Yu's parents had realized that their child was missing after they came home after work. When they went out to look for him in the pouring rain, the last place they had been seen was unknown, but their bodies were most likely trapped under the water well at Mu Yang High School, and the boy was probably the sole witness of the whole event.

It was also probably because he had witnessed the whole process that Fan Yu had become like this.

Chen Ge looked at the surface of the table and frowned. He pulled out the black phone to look for the details of the side missions for School of Afterlife. The description for Side Mission 6, Deep Well, was 'One brother and one sister went to school, but how come no one returned?'

The black phone would not make a mistake, so what did the pair of siblings have to do with Fan Yu's parents? According to the hint on the black phone, it was the siblings who fell into the well and not the boy's parents. Why was that?

Chen Ge put the black phone away and looked at the woman with tears in her eyes. He asked with uncertainty, "Is Fan Yu an only child? Does he have brothers or sisters?"

The moment the question left his lips, the woman's expression changed. Her nails scratched deep into her skin, and her tears fell freely. "If the accident did not happen to my two children, then Xiao Yu would have had a brother and a sister to play with."

"Your children?" Before Chen Ge entered the room, he had noticed that the clothes hanging on the rods outside were mostly women's and children's, so he had assumed the woman was not married.

"They died when they were still very young, mere toddlers." The woman was on the verge of a breakdown. She blurted a quick sorry before escaping into the kitchen to collect herself.

Then, Fan Yu does have a brother and sister, but according to the woman's description, they passed away a long time ago. Why would the black phone say the pair of siblings did not return home after school? Why would toddlers attend school? Is the black phone mistaken, or is the woman lying? Or was Fan Yu hallucinating?

The woman stayed inside the kitchen for a long time. Chen Ge stood up and headed toward the only other room in the house. Fan Yu should be inside; he was the focal point of this whole mystery.

Chen Ge pushed open the door, and the bedroom he stepped into was very clean. Fan Yu was standing before the table, seemingly writing something. Chen Ge walked up to the boy and looked over his shoulder. He realized the boy was drawing, and he had a preference for black and red colors.

"Xiao Yu, what are you drawing?" Afraid that he might spook the boy, Chen Ge spoke in a soft voice. The boy turned to look at Chen Ge but did not answer. He turned back to focus on his drawing.

As he continued to add colors, the picture on the paper started to materialize.

In a pure black house stood several red miniature humans.

After finishing the drawing, the boy crumpled the paper up and threw it onto the floor before starting a new drawing.

Chen Ge stood and watched for a long time. He realized the central theme of Fan Yu's drawings comprised of only these two things—A black house and small, red humans.

What is he trying to convey? Chen Ge picked up the finished drawing from the floor and flattened it out. After studying it for some time, he silently slid it inside his pocket.

Chapter 74: Group Photo

Red has the longest wavelength of the visible light spectrum. It is the direct contrast to black so pairing them together creates a unique optical effect.

The black house was dark as night while the red humans were fresh as blood. The picture created a great pressure on those who viewed it.

"The boy's favorite pastime is drawing. He doesn't like to go out and often secludes himself in his room." Unbeknownst to Chen Ge, the woman had entered the room. She held two glasses of water in her hands. "Now, I no longer wish for anything but for him to grow up happily like a normal boy."

The woman passed a glass of water to Chen Ge while placing the other beside the boy. "Let's go outside, he is afraid of contact with strangers."

"Okay." Chen Ge returned to the living room, holding the glass of water. The woman sat down across from him.

"Do you have any other questions?" The woman seemed to have put her guard up again.

"The poor child, I believe that he was traumatized when he was young, so to cure his condition, we have to find out the reason why and then work from there." Chen Ge vocalized his inner thoughts. "You are his only family, and it is obvious that you care about him, do you mind if I ask you a few more questions?"

The woman nodded. She had a thin sheen of sweat on her forehead, probably due to the heat.

"Earlier, you mentioned that Fan Yu's parents went missing after going out in search of him, so where was Fan Yu ultimately found?"

"At Mu Yang High School. He was hiding in my brother's office."

"Mu Yang High School again? Weird things seem to keep on happening at that place."

"You couldn't be more right..." The woman sighed. "Mu Yang High School is the worst school in Jiujiang. To be honest, I don't even understand the purpose of its existence. Before it was shut down, the police had to visit it every other day on account of the constant fighting."

"That serious?" Chen Ge listened closely. After all, getting the information from the woman was much more convenient than researching online.

"That's not all." The woman stood up and continued in a serious tone. "The school is famously haunted. According to the nearby elders, the place was originally a crematorium. It was knocked down due to city planning, but just think about it, how peaceful could the school be, being built on top of a site like that? I advised my brother not to seek employment there, but he just refused to listen to me."

"Then why did your brother insist on going to teach at Mu Yang High School?"

"The salary was high, and he had a record, so it was difficult for him to find a job. Who would have thought that would be his last job?"

"A record? Did he make some enemies? Could his disappearance be related to that?" Chen Ge latched onto the details in the woman's conversation.

"No, it's nothing like that. My brother liked to drink, but he was a horrible drinker. That was why he was fired from his original school, and a bad history was left on his record. There were only so many schools in Jiujiang, and that made it difficult for him to get a new job."

"Then, his disappearance doesn't sound like it was caused by revenge."

"It's definitely not."

The woman's confidence made Chen Ge narrow his eyes. "How can you be so sure?"

The woman hesitated before she pulled out a picture from the drawer to place it on the table. "Ever since the initial opening of the school, there was a classroom that had always stayed locked, and entry was forbidden for all staff and students. Other than the headmaster, nobody knew why. After the old headmaster passed away, this became a mystery. There are still many legends surrounding that classroom. People said it was a reserved classroom for the spirits who had perished in the crematorium, or some tragedy had befallen the workers before the school was completed. In any case, it is a very dark place."

"What does that have to do with your brother's disappearance?" Chen Ge was confused.

"Take a look at this, and you will understand why."

Chen Ge accepted the photo from the woman, and it was a very curious group photo. A drunken man sat in the middle, and around him stood several rows of students.

It did sound like a normal graduation photo, but the problem lay in the fact that all the students were turned away from the camera!

And should one look closer, every student was standing in a curious manner—they were all on their tiptoes.

"Where did you find this picture, and have you showed it to the police?" Chen Ge placed the photo back on the table and rubbed the sweat that covered his palms.

"The night before his disappearance, my brother was at the bar watching the ball game with his friends. To ensure he would be able to attend work the next morning, he decided to sleep in the nurse's office. When he passed one of the classrooms, he saw many people standing inside. Praising the class for their hardworking attitude, he stopped for a moment in front of the classroom's door. The people inside the class seemed to be in the middle of taking a class photo. When they saw him, they invited him in to take the central seat. After taking the picture, the students left, and he himself was unclear who ultimately gave him this picture." The woman's voice was flat, but the story made Chen Ge's skin crawl.

"When my brother saw the picture, it gave him such a shock that he woke up from the alcohol instantly. It was then that he realized he was sitting inside the sealed classroom." The woman pushed the picture toward Chen Ge. "He only revealed this to me and sister-in-law. We all thought it would eventually blow away, but the next day, that unfortunate incident happened. Xiao Yu suddenly disappeared, and the

both of them went searching for him, but it was them who ended up missing. Therefore, I believe their disappearance doesn't have anything to do with revenge but was related to that sealed classroom."

"What did the police say?" Chen Ge pushed the photo back.

"They did bring the photo back to Mu Yang High School to conduct an investigation. Even though the students in the picture were wearing Mu Yang High School's uniform, they could not be found at the school. They opened up the sealed classroom and took a close look. All they found were my brother's footprints, which confirmed that my brother was indeed once inside that room."

"Okay, I understand." Chen Ge asked the woman a few more questions, most of which she had no answer for and for some she only provided a vague answer. After knowing he would not get any new information from the woman, Chen Ge stood up to leave.

"Leaving so soon? It's so hot outside, why don't you take a sip of the drink before you leave?"

"Thank you, but I'm not thirsty." Chen Ge thanked the woman for her kindness before leaving the second floor.

After the conversation with the woman, Chen Ge had a better understanding of Mu Yang High School. *There are four side missions at Mu Yang High School, and two of them are related to the little boy's family.*

He took out Fan Yu's drawing from his pocket to take another few looks. The contrast of black and red seemed to be telling him something. *Black house and red men. Could they be related to Mu Yang High School? Could this drawing refer to a building at Mu Yang High School?*

Chapter 75: Mu Yang High School

A child's thinking is more direct and less metaphorical. Could this drawing be an actual representation of the crime scene that he witnessed?

The house is black, meaning the time of the crime was at night, and the people inside the house are red—they probably represent his parents, the victims. This is the most direct interpretation.

Chen Ge tried looking at this painting from multiple angles. The boy had a hasty artistic style; all the human shapes looked the same and had no defining features. Chen Ge could not even tell their gender.

Wait, the red humans probably aren't referring to his parents, there are way too many of them in the drawing. Chen Ge tried counting the number of red people, but every time he ended up with a different number. *The drawing is too messy. What is the boy actually trying to communicate with it?*

In the room, Fan Yu kept on repeating the same drawing. They were all about a black house and many red people. However, every time he was done, he would crumble up the drawings and toss them away as if he was dissatisfied with them.

Regardless, this painting is a crucial clue. Chen Ge came up with nothing even after studying the painting for a long time. He pocketed the drawing and glanced at the building behind him. The door, which he had left ajar, was now shut.

Both the aunt and the child are problematic in their own way. The question is... whose problem is bigger? Chen Ge got on the bus after escaping the maze-like paths. He was worried about his upcoming mission. If the woman was not lying to him, the test he was about to face that night would be incredibly difficult.

For the sake of safety, Chen Ge took out his phone to search for more information on Mu Yang High School online. He came up with quite a large amount of information, and most of it came from various school forums.

Based on the timeline, the posters probably were once students at Mu Yang High School, and after the school closed down, they were forced to change school and took the legends of Mu Yang High School along with them.

After a cursory glance, a few of them did capture Chen Ge's attention. About one year ago, five students snuck into Mu Yang High School on a dare. They used their phones to record their experience, but instead of videoing the event, they updated a thread every few minutes.

The original thread had long since been removed, and Chen Ge was reading a shared post. According to rumors, they had entered the sealed classroom and started playing the game of Pen Spirit.

The five had sat around a table to summon the Pen Spirit, but as the game went on, there had ultimately been seven people standing in the classroom. No one knew where the additional two had come from, and the five ran out of the school, crying and yelling all the way.

Luckily, all five of them had survived the ordeal, but two of them seemed to have been traumatized from the incident. One of them had turned illogically violent while the other had acquired an irrational fear of daylight. Eventually, the two had moved out of Jiujiang.

Chen Ge looked at some of the comments under the post. A poster pointed out that during the game, two additional persons appeared, and in the end, there were two students who were traumatized. The poster suspected that the two who escaped were already someone else, and the original two were still trapped inside that classroom.

This speculation received many likes, but there were other opposing views as well. Some said all five had been possessed, but the two had stronger constitutions, and that was why they had acted weirdly.

There was a pinned message from a teacher that banned further discussion on Mu Yang High School. Chen Ge scrolled through the thread and realized there was one that was hidden.

Chen Ge opened it, and he was baffled by the content. The poster stated that his father's company had planned to purchase the land on which Mu Yang High School was located for a low price. Initially, everything was fine, but when the contract was almost ready, his father would have the same dream every night. Many students wearing Mu Yang High School's uniform would come to their house for classes.

The weird thing was, when they woke up, there was evidence of forced entry into their house. His father was so scared that he fell ill before finally resigning. That was the end of the story.

After reading all the posts, Chen Ge could not help but compare Mu Yang High School and Western Jiujiang's Private Academy, since they were both schools, and he came to a weird discovery.

There were many supernatural rumors about Mu Yang High School online, but none of the stories mentioned death or injury. In comparison, while there was not much information on Western Jiujiang's Private Academy online, the record at the police station showed that there was more than one death that had happened at the school.

If I really think about it, Western Jiujiang's Private Academy does sound scarier. That was the only way Chen Ge could have made himself feel better.

Sitting on the bus and looking out the window, Chen Ge's phone suddenly rang. He looked down and saw it was from He San.

The kid sensed the possible unlocking of a new scenario, so he called to book in advance? Chen Ge answered the call and placed his phone beside his ear. "Hello?"

"Boss, quickly get on the video-sharing app, someone is coming for your bread and butter!"

"Huh? There's someone who is opening a new Haunted House?" Chen Ge clicked open the app, and before he was allowed entry into the homepage, an ad appeared on his phone—'Host, Qin Guang leads you to explore an actual haunted house!'

Chen Ge clicked on the screen and more details popped up.

Qin Guang was a famous livestream host on the platform. He had more than 600,000 followers, and most of his short videos had a humorous theme. On his personal bio, it stated that he belonged to XX Studio, and that studio was the same one who had tried to cozy up to Chen Ge earlier when he was at Ping An Apartments.

The ad explained that Qin Guang's latest adventure was to branch into a new livestreaming territory, to host a mystery livestream inside an actual haunted house.

Chen Ge did not think too much of it at first, but when he saw Qin Guang's first mystery location, he was speechless. Qin Guang's team was going to livestream at Western Jiujiang's Ping An Apartments.

"Boss, have you seen it? That man realized that you had more than ten thousand views on your first livestream, so he's trying to copy your formula!" He San grumbled indignantly.

"There's no need to worry, certain things cannot be copied."

Chen Ge had thought He San was going to bring him some big news, so he was rather disappointed. He was not that worried about Qin Guang, although he also knew Qin Guang would not see him as competition either.

On the other end of the phone, He San said urgently, "He has so many followers. After he consolidates himself as a supernatural host, I'm afraid they'll turn around and claim that it was you who copied them!"

"It'll be fine. By the way, are you familiar with child psychology? I have a few questions for you."

"Boss, what time is it, you still have the luxury to ask questions like that? Furthermore, I'm a forensic doctor. For questions of psychology, you should refer to psychologist or psychiatrist!"

Chapter 76: School on a Rainy Night

“There’s a boy who came to visit my Haunted House today. He looked about eight or nine, doesn’t like to speak, and the darker the place, the more excited he gets, what kind of symptom are these?” Chen Ge voiced the problem directly. He only had two people he could ask; one was He San, and the other was He Feng.

“Forensic students focus on practical medicine, biology, and some chemistry. Psychology focuses on mental phenomena, neuroscience, and psychiatry. They are completely different fields. Even if you ask me, I won’t be able to provide you with an answer.” He San sighed helplessly. “Boss, are you really not planning to do anything about this? I notice you have not updated for a few days already, and your previous livestream was days ago. If you allow this to continue, your popularity will start to fall. Look at your profile page, there are already comments that say you’re running out of ideas, and they even started to mock your Haunted House.”

“Mock my Haunted House? There’s such a thing?” This did make Chen Ge worry. He clicked into his personal page and realized there were indeed plenty of negative comments.

“Boss, there are currently too many short videos, and homogenization is a serious problem. Once you stop updating, the viewers will quickly move onto other uploaders.”

“You’re right, but things aren’t as serious as you think,” Chen Ge replied. His focus was still on Fan Yu and his aunt. He had always treated the livestream and videos as additional support; the most important thing was still the missions on the black phone.

“If you say so. I just wanted to remind you.” There was a saddened trace to He San’s voice. “That Qin Guang is an established host, and on top of that, he has great support from his studio. The platform will definitely provide him with plenty of promotion, but I still believe your livestream will be better than his.”

“His content is an imitation of mine,” Chen Ge replied with a smile. The biggest difference between his content and other hosts’ was that his was completely authentic and could not be copied. “Yes, I am widely lagging behind in terms of resources, channels, and fans, but if we’re talking about the understanding and handling of the fear factor, he is still a rookie.”

“You’re right! After all, you’re a professional.” He San paused before adding, “Boss, I suddenly remembered something.”

“What is it?”

“Do you still remember the senior of mine that you scared until she cried?”

“Your description fits so many people—you might as well give me the name directly.”

“Gao Ru Xue. Her father is a psychologist and a tenured lecturer in criminal psychology. I’ll ask if she can help you tonight.”

“Okay, if you succeed, I’ll treat you to a meal and gift you a free tour of the Haunted House’s new scenario.” Chen Ge appreciated the aid of this honest young man and easily promised a reward.

"Thanks, but no thanks! Last time I visited your Haunted House, it caused me to have nightmares for a few consecutive nights," He San complained. "This one time, I fell asleep in class, and I didn't even know the lecturer had wandered to my side. In my dream, I was chased by a crazed doctor holding a hammer. When I ran to the top of the stairs, I felt a hand on my shoulder. I was so shocked that my body just reacted with an elbow jab, and when I opened my eyes, the lecturer's glasses were broken already..."

Chen Ge tried to hold in his laughter, but he failed. "Alright then. I won't force you to visit the Haunted House in the future."

After chatting for a bit more, Chen Ge finally hung up. He looked out the window, and the sun was slowly covered up by rain clouds. When he returned to New Century Park, from afar, Chen Ge saw a group of people crowding the entrance of the Haunted House. Xu Wan was busy negotiating with them.

"Xiao Wan, what's the matter?"

"You're finally back. These visitors are all here to visit the Haunted House, but since I could not find you, I could only ask for their patience." Xu Wan was already out of her make-up, and her forehead was filled with sweat from the anxiety.

"Well done. Stay outside to sell them the tickets, leave the rest to me." Chen Ge pushed open the gate, put on the Doctor Skull-cracker outfit, and entered the Murder by Midnight scenario.

At around 4 pm, it started to drizzle, and the clouds in the sky thickened. Many of the park attractions had to stop for fear of accidents, and most visitors who still had not had their fill went to the indoor attractions. It was thus that Chen Ge's Haunted House became an unlikely favorite. The crowd outside the place was huge until 5 pm, when it started to disperse.

Chen Ge, who had run around the building for the whole afternoon, was exhausted. He removed his outfit and walked out of the Haunted House.

The sky was dark, and the wind was howling.

It was also pouring several years ago when Fan Yu's parents disappeared. Chen Ge looked at the sky with a complicated emotion. He told Xu Wan to go home before returning to the maintenance room to prepare his backpack.

He shoved a lighter, flashlight, multi-purpose mallet, and doll into it and left the Haunted House in a raincoat. Due to the unexpected crowd, when Chen Ge left the park, it was already 6 pm. He stopped a cab at the entrance, but when he told the driver his destination was Mu Yang High School, the driver refused to take him.

He had no choice but to wait for another. The other driver told Chen Ge that the roads leading to Mu Yang High School were already overgrown with shrubs and were unpassable by car, so he could only drop Chen Ge near Mu Yang High School.

There was a time limit on the mission. Arriving early meant more time to scout and consequently lower the risk. Chen Ge did not want to waste time. After negotiating the price with the driver, he departed.

On the way there, he asked the driver for more information on Mu Yang High School, but the driver merely looked ahead with a serious expression and focused fully on his driving. In that moment, Chen Ge found himself missing the talkative uncle who had driven him to Western Jiujiang's Private Academy.

At around 7 pm, they finally reached the destination. The road was horrible, and the place was even more backwards than the countryside.

"The car cannot continue any further, so this is where I'll have to stop." The driver pointed outside the window. "There should be people living nearby, so go to them if you're lost. Send me the fare through WeChat; I don't accept cash."

"No cash?" Chen Ge was confused, but he did not ask further; everyone had their quirks. After paying, he got out from the taxi.

The rain started to intensify, and the sky by then was completely dark. Chen Ge looked around him, and there were indeed several rows of houses a distance away, but they looked abandoned because they were completely dark.

"How am I supposed to find Mu Yang High School?"

Chen Ge turned to ask the driver, only to see the driver toss the seat mat he had sat on earlier out the window and turn around to leave without hesitation.

He refused to take my cash and tossed out the mat I sat on earlier... what is the meaning of this? Is it because he thinks I'm dirty?

Chapter 77: The Paper and Pen on the Table

The strange way the taxi driver acted unsettled Chen Ge. Taxi drivers were the party that were the most familiar with the city; thus, they knew the taboo places that populated the city.

Has the driver misunderstood me?

The mat was dropped in the mud and was soon drenched by the rain. While he was reading the supernatural stories on Mu Yang High School, Chen Ge did not think they were that scary. However, after the incident with the taxi driver, Chen Ge's bravery started to waver.

The requirement of this mission is merely for me to survive. This means that even the black phone believes that surviving will be a huge challenge.

In the blink of an eye, the taxi disappeared down the road. Chen Ge stood in his raincoat surrounded by a wide expanse of nothing but trees. It felt like he was abandoned in the wild.

The rain continued to pour. Chen Ge pulled the raincoat tighter and pulled out his flashlight to wander down the muddy road. The rainclouds were low in the sky, blocking out the moonlight. Chen Ge moved toward the buildings that he had seen earlier, and it was not until then that he realized how rundown they actually were.

Rusted chains hung off the door, and the glass on the window had long since been broken. Looking through the cracks, Chen Ge saw that the interior was stuffed with rotten furniture and trash with unknown bugs crawling over the ground.

There's not a single sign of a living person, is this place that cursed?

Before he came, he did obtain several precious nuggets of information from Fan Yu's aunt. Therefore, Chen Ge knew a thing or two about the surroundings of Mu Yang High School. Since there was no one for him to ask, he could only wander deeper into the unknown based on his memory.

The road was muddy from the rain, and it was bordered on both sides by weirdly-shaped trees, but they had all overgrown into the road due to a lack of trimming.

Mu Yang High School's site was once a crematorium. As scary as that is, it meant that there had to be a road for vehicles. However, the road keeps getting smaller and smaller; it's practically impossible for any four-wheeled vehicle to traverse. Am I even on the right road? The intensity of the rain slowed Chen Ge's progress. It'll not bode well if I get lost. If Mu Yang High School is not at the end of this road, I'll need to turn back and abandon this quest.

Chen Ge continued on the road at another thirty minutes. At the end of the road, he saw a sign that was knocked off the ground and a wooden fence.

There's lichen growing on its side—it has been on the ground for years already.

Chen Ge pulled the sign upright, but the characters were too faded for him to make any sense of it. He used his flashlight to scan the sign. *Why does the lichen only grow on one side? Is it because of the sun, or has someone been here recently to move the sign and the fence?*

He stopped moving and looked at the time on his phone. *It's almost 8 pm, and the mission location is still nowhere to be found. The only good news is that I still have coverage. At least I can call for help in case of an emergency.*

The night was exceptionally dark because of the rain. Chen Ge's phone was the sole source of light for miles. *Both sign and fence are here, but weirdly enough, they seem like they have recently been moved. This is curious.*

Chen Ge used the sign to part the shrubbery that blocked his way. He walked for another ten meters before the scenery changed. A row of broken wooden railings stood in the middle of the forest, and within the railings were several squat buildings.

This is Mu Yang High School?

Compared to Western Jiujiang's Private Academy, this school looked far more dilapidated. Its size was less than one-third of Western Jiujiang's Private Academy.

Chen Ge did not let his guard down simply because the place was smaller in size. The school being smaller might not necessarily be a good thing. Yes, the need for exploration had decreased but so had the space for hiding.

Chen Ge tossed the sign aside and jumped over the rail into Mu Yang High School. All the buildings of the school could be captured with one glance.

The one closest to the entrance was the education block. It seemed to have been the victim of a huge fire. The surface was charred black, and the corners of the wall seemed cracked, as if it could fall at any given moment.

To the left side of the education block was the dormitory. Probably due to the low number of students, the dormitory only had two stories and barely a handful of rooms. To the right was the office, and from the exterior, the building seemed to be the best preserved.

Behind the education block was an uneven field. Two basketball courts and several ping pong tables stood to the side.

Thus was the layout for Mu Yang High School. Other than its rich supernatural history, the school itself was lacking in flavor and personality. Chen Ge suspected that the real reason for closure was not something supernatural but rather there were simply no new students who wished to study here.

Weirdly enough, when Chen Ge arrived at his destination, he felt calmer. He was an expert at managing his emotions.

There are four side missions at Mu Yang High School: The Pen Spirit, The Fifth Cubicle in the Toilet, Deep Well, and The Sealed Classroom. If I want to unlock the full scenario, I mustn't miss out on any of them.

In the previous mission, it was because Chen Ge had a more than ninety percent completion rate that he obtained the hidden reward—Wang Qi's Missing Person Notice. It was this item that had bridged the relationship between Chen Ge and Xiaoxiao's family.

He understood the importance of having a high mission completion rate, but it was easier said than done. Any one of the side missions could rival the creepiness of a Nightmare Mission, and he was expected to complete all four in one night.

It is still not yet midnight. There's still time before the active hour for the residents of the other world. I should scout out these four locations. If the difficulty is too high, I still have time to leave.

Chen Ge put the doll in his chest, whipped out his trusty mallet, and headed toward the education block.

The surface of the building was black with soot that remained even after so many years.

The whole building is burnt, could this be related to the original crematorium?

Chen Ge moved lightly. He remembered the mission description provided by the black phone.

"There's a classroom at the end of the corridor that's always sealed. No one ever enters it, but every night, the classroom will come alive with activity."

Bad luck befell Fan Yu's father after he entered that classroom, so that classroom might be the center of the paranormal activities at Mu Yang High School.

The creepy photo appeared in Chen Ge's mind. There was a high chance he would have to spend the night with the roomful of students who refused to meet the camera.

All the classrooms were locked, and Chen Ge could only peer in through the windows with his flashlight. The front few classrooms were normal abandoned classrooms. It was not until Chen Ge reached the very last classroom at the end of corridor that he spotted something weird.

The classroom was curiously preserved from the fire. However, what attracted Chen Ge's attention the most were the books, paper, and pen that were placed on the table in the middle of the classroom, creating the illusion that someone had just attended a class there.

Chapter 78: I Can't Control My Right Hand

Shall I go in to take a closer look?

Chen Ge was anxious. Holding the mallet in his hand, he wished desperate to knock the door down to see what was written on the piece of paper.

According to the school forum, five students once broke into Mu Yang High School to play a game of Pen Spirit in the last classroom on a dare. Could the pen and paper have been left behind by them? Chen Ge thought about it and realized that was impossible. According to the post's description, when the two extra people appeared in the room, the five students were so scared that they escaped as fast as they could. In their desperation to escape, they had to knock over some of the furniture, but all the tables and chairs in the room now were neatly arranged.

Of course, that doesn't take away from the possibility that after they left, the furniture was rearranged or the speculation that all five were possessed.

Chen Ge put his mallet down and decided to save the classroom for last. After leaving the education block, Chen Ge headed for the dormitory.

The dilapidated squat building had less than a handful of rooms, and he walked around it for a long time before coming across a faded iron sign. The characters on it were smudged, but Chen Ge believed that it once read 'Second Floor is Female Rooms. No Entry to Males.'

This school sure is shabby.

After removing his raincoat, Chen Ge dabbed at the rain that had seeped into his collar and was about to carry on when his phone rang. He looked at the caller ID and answered it readily. "He San?"

"Boss, I've given my senior your phone number. She said that she would have her father contact you when he's home."

"Thank you, is there anything else?"

"Also, that Qin Guang has just started his livestream. Are you sure you're not going to take a look? He hired an actor to play the killer next door, and his opening and even his analysis were a complete copy of yours. I didn't even know from where I should start to complain."

"Let him be then. But when I start my livestream in a bit, remember to come support me."

“You’re starting a livestream?” He San’s voice shot up several octaves. Chen Ge was gladdened that he had such a loyal viewer. “Since it has been quite long since my previous livestream, I have something exciting planned this time.”

There was silence on the other end of the phone. Chen Ge could hear shuffling footsteps several seconds later. He San seemed to have put on his slippers to run around his bedroom to shake every one of his roommates awake. “It’s time to get up to watch the livestream! Yet another bout with death tonight!”

While Chen Ge was thankful for He San’s free promotion, but his words did make him feel a bit weirded out.

After hanging up, Chen Ge opened up the video-sharing app. Qin Guang’s supernatural livestream was heavily promoted on the front page. He clicked on it for a quick look. It was obvious that a full team was behind this production. There was a professional cameraman, and Qin Guang was only responsible for the analysis and looking for clues. Just the comparison of video quality alone could squish Chen Ge like a bug. He definitely could not fault his opponent for having better preparation.

680,000 views. If I had that many views to promote my Haunted House, wouldn’t the whole park be filled the next day?

Livestreams and short videos were Chen Ge’s only way of advertisement, and Qin Guang’s featured livestream did point a way for Chen Ge. If he could reach Qin Guang’s level of popularity, then perhaps one day the platform would be willing to use so many resources to support him.

Chen Ge, don’t get too far ahead of yourself for now. Focus on the current goal of surviving tonight first.

He left Qin Guang’s livestream and opened his own. He was stranded at the countryside, so his connection was weak. His livestream video was fuzzy, and there were constant black screens and lag. He could not even see the chat.

My video quality might not be as good as Qin Guang’s, but my content is definitely better than his...

Since he couldn’t see the chat, Chen Ge could not communicate with his viewers. After a brief introduction of Mu Yang High School, he stopped following the livestream. Chen Ge searched through the first floor of the dormitory and came up with nothing, so he moved to the second floor.

“The female dormitory room looks similar to the males’.”

The rooms were filled with textbooks and trash. When the school was closed, most of the stuff inside it was not cleared out. Chen Ge looked through the rooms patiently with his flashlight. When he passed through the fourth bedroom on the second floor, he discovered that there were four chairs placed neatly in a row inside the room, and several pieces of white paper as well as a ballpoint pen were placed on one of the chairs.

“The paper and pen look brand new, so they must have been placed inside the room after the school was closed.”

This was the second time that Chen Ge had come across the combination of paper and pen. The rusted lock was a mere decoration. Chen Ge merely rattled it several times before it fell away.

As the door opened, the smell of mold hit him like a wave. Chen Ge covered his mouth and nose as he walked closer to the chair to look at the pieces of paper.

There were four white papers in total, the first one read—'When will I die?'

The second read—'How will I die?'

The third read—'Who will be the next to die?'

The fourth was completely empty.

The Pen Spirit game?

Chen Ge ransacked the rest of the room to try to come up with some extra info, but most of the stuff had decayed from time.

Since his investigation turned up nothing, Chen Ge turned his focus back on the white paper in the middle of the room. *No one could provide an actual explanation behind the Pen Spirit game, but the scientific community stresses that it was reasons like breathing, heartbeat, and blood flow that caused the human body to shiver. A simple human without special training would have their arm move after maintaining them in a constant, elevated position for a long time. This is a natural bodily reaction that has nothing to do with legends of the Pen Spirit.*

Chen Ge placed the phone on the bed and made sure himself and the four chairs were all within view.

Since I need to complete all four side missions at Mu Yang High School, might as well start with this one.

He turned to close the bedroom door. He stood and hesitated for four minutes before sitting down and picking up the ballpoint pen.

Internally, he told himself not to worry. Chen Ge placed the doll in his chest pocket, and with his right hand holding the pen and left hand holding the mallet, he started the game of Pen Spirit.

He tried to remember as many details from the thread that he had read earlier. He raised his arm slightly and straightened the pen so that the tip of the pen touched the white paper. He closed his eyes and started to chant.

"Pen Spirit, Pen Spirit, you are my spirit from my previous life, and I am your spirit in this life. If you are with us, please draw a circle on the paper."

After chanting, Chen Ge tried to make himself calm down. His arm was suspended over the paper, his body frozen.

The rain outside the window continued to fall. The school that was swallowed by the night started to shift imperceptibly.

The moldy smell in the room dispersed, and a cold draft of an unknown origin lifted the white paper on the chair slightly. Not long after that, Chen Ge's eyes flew open. He had just felt someone grip his hand.

Chen Ge stared closely at his right hand while his left hand tightened over the mallet. He would strike the moment things went wrong.

Chapter 79: A Chance to Redeem Yourself

A weird smell suffused the cramped female bedroom. The bedsheet that was beyond the light of the flashlight fluttered lightly like something was crawling out from underneath it. Rain droplets fell on the window. A storm was brewing outside, but inside the dormitory room, it was eerily quiet.

With his arm hanging over the white paper, Chen Ge tried to make himself relax. After chanting the spell to invoke the Pen Spirit, there was an obvious pressure on the back of his palm like someone had placed their hand over his. Chen Ge could even feel the chills coming from the other person's fingertips.

"Pen Spirit, Pen Spirit, you are my spirit from my previous life, and I am your spirit in this life. If you are with us, please draw a circle on the paper."

Chen Ge chanted again, and the feeling of iciness on the back of his hand intensified. However, to his befuddlement, the pen in his grasp remained upright. It did not draw a circle or even do anything.

The Pen Spirit refuses to answer my call?

The atmosphere in the room turned palpable with pressure, and the chill from the back of his hand had now spread to his arm.

For some reason, I feel like a few more individuals have joined me in this room.

Chen Ge focused, and his pupils started to dilate in the dark. Probably due to the Yin Yang Vision, he could see three blurry shadows standing around him with their hands extended to grab the pen in Chen Ge's palm.

Three of you?

Chen Ge's heart skipped a beat, but with a blink, the image that he saw instantly disappeared. However, Chen Ge knew that it did not mean they had left. Chen Ge's palm felt like it had been stuck inside a cold-water bath. He was certain that there were at least three other hands holding the pen in his grasp.

Three 'individuals' answered my call. Is this the effect of my 'Specter's Favored' title?

While Chen Ge was trying to figure out an answer, the pen that hovered over the paper suddenly moved. It was slight, but Chen Ge definitely felt it.

Is it beginning?

The flashlight he placed to his side seemed to have dimmed, and under Chen Ge's close scrutiny, the pen in his grasp started to move. The tip of the pen attached itself to the surface of the paper, and with the friction between the paper and the pen, soon a red circle was drawn.

Chen Ge knew he did not move, but there was indeed a drawing on the paper. Chen Ge stared at the circle, and he was reminded of this side mission's name—The Pen Spirit Who Refused to Leave.

There are three taboos to the Pen Spirit game. One, you mustn't ask about your cause of death; two, you mustn't ask about your life expectancy; three, you have to unbind the spirit when you're done. Violating any one of these will lead to horrible consequences.

The third was the most serious because if the spirit was not unbound, it would stay by the person who had invoked it forever until it turned malevolent and killed all the players.

“Hopefully, there is no accident,” Chen Ge murmured before shifting his focus back onto the white paper. The red circle was drawn right in the middle of the paper.

Sounds like it has heard my voice. It's time for me to ask some questions.

Chen Ge was only there to complete the black phone's mission. He did not want to try anything stupid lest he angered the spirit.

It is rare to have summoned the Pen Spirit. Chen Ge thought about it and voiced the question that he most wished to know the answer to. “Pen Spirit, Pen Spirit, do you know where my parents are?”

When he did the bathtub Nightmare Mission, the people Chen Ge wanted to meet the most were his parents, but his wish had not been fulfilled. However, this did tell him that at least his parents were still alive. They were merely missing.

Chen Ge did want to know the answer to this question. However, to his surprise, when he posed this question, the pen in his grasp started to quiver, and there was even a faded crack that appeared on the body of the pen.

This was different to what he expected. *Is my question that difficult?*

Two minutes later, Chen Ge had an uncanny feeling that the room had turned brighter. The pen in his hand started to move again to draw another circle.

What does that mean? Pass? Chen Ge looked at the two circles on the paper, and he could sense the Pen Spirit's awkwardness. It did not know the answer to his question either.

This is weird, but it does sound like my parents' disappearance is more complicated than it appears. Chen Ge was silent for a long time. Other than this question, he really did not have anything that he was that curious about. *So be it, I'll just ask a random question just to get this side mission over with.*

The chill on his arm had spread to his shoulder. As the game continued, Chen Ge could feel about half of his body starting to get numb like it was slowly escaping his control.

“Then I shall switch to a different question. Pen Spirit, Pen Spirit, can you please tell me who my future wife will be?”

The pen quivered, and the flashlight flickered as if announcing the arrival of something. The atmosphere in the room started to get nervous again. The window rattled on its hinges, and droplets of rain seeped into the room. Lightning flashed across the sky, and in that split second, there were four shadows that were reflected on the wall.

Chen Ge felt his hand weaken as the pen in it started to move. Blood red letters appeared on the white paper, and soon, the first character was finished.

“Xu? Is it Xu Wan?” Despite it supposedly being a throwaway question, Chen Ge's interest was piqued. The pen in his hand continued moving, but as it was starting to begin the second character, it suddenly stopped moving.

“What’s going on?”

Chen Ge was a spectator in this whole enterprise. He did not exert any force, but the pen in his grasp began to quiver violently, and more cracks started to form on its surface.

BANG!

Many forces seemed to be fighting within the darkened bedroom. The ballpoint pen finally crumbled under pressure and cracked. One of the forces seemed to have surrendered. Then Chen Ge saw something shocking.

The pen in his grasp crossed out the “Xu” that was already written and wrote down another name beside it!

“Zhang... Ya?”

The name was so perfectly and clearly written on the white paper that Chen Ge did not even know how to respond. “Pen Spirit, are you sure this is the name that you intended to write from the very beginning?”

There was no answer, and the chill on his arm also disappeared. “Pen Spirit, are you still with us? If you can hear me, please draw a circle.”

The feeling of Yin energy had dissipated completely, and the room had returned to normal. It seemed like the Pen Spirit had left without saying goodbye. However, for the sake of security, Chen Ge chanted, “Pen Spirit, Pen Spirit, you are my spirit from my previous life, and I am your spirit in this life. If you wish to go, then please go ahead.”

Chen Ge stood up from beside the chair since the game was already over. Once he relinquished his grasp, the ballpoint pen in his grasp split into several sections. The whole thing just looked sad.

My game of Pen Spirit sure is different from others’.

Chen Ge picked up his phone and realized with a start that his livestream’s popularity had surpassed 20,000 views—this was a brand-new record for him.

Chapter 80: The Fifth Cubicle in the Toilet

When did the views surpass 20,000? At the beginning of the livestream, I remember seeing only ten people in the room. Chen Ge raised the phone up to the ceiling, but the signal was still weak. The chat was lagging badly. One moment, he could not even load a single comment, but suddenly, he would be overwhelmed by a ton. He could barely make sense of anything.

20,000 views but less than 5,000 followers, this ratio is a bit lacking.

Chen Ge used his phone to snap pictures of the few pieces of paper that had been used in the Pen Spirit game. He then turned the camera to capture the broken ballpoint pen that sat in the middle of the chair. “Dear viewers, can you see this? I have played the Pen Spirit game until the pen itself committed suicide! Aren’t you going to follow me? Do you know how much I’m risking being here? An unknown

host like myself, without equipment or a team. I'm here all alone, threading the line of danger. I know my equipment is not that great, and I can't even interact with you in chat, but I can lead you into the most authentic supernatural experience. This is definitely one of a kind and cannot be copied."

After giving his speech, the number of followers started to rise. For Chen Ge, he was merely completing the black phone's mission, but it was a different concern from the viewers' perspective. Especially in comparison to Qin Guang's livestream. Even though Chen Ge was lacking in terms of equipment, his content was inimitable, whether from the aspect of danger or spectacle.

The key to a successful livestream was none other than freshness and creativity. Qin Guang's team relied on a finished script, and they even had an actor to play the part. However, no matter how realistic the actor's acting was, it would appear forced. However, Chen Ge's content was very different; even Chen Ge himself did not know what would happen next.

"Thank you for your support. That was the Pen Spirit game, please do not try this at home. Alright, now we shall move onto the next location." Looking at the popularity that was still rising, Chen Ge was overjoyed. In any case, since he had to finish these missions dispensed by the black phone, why not make use of them fully and convert them into popularity?

I wonder what is happening inside the chatroom, but a rising popularity is a good thing. At least my risk of coming here tonight is not going to waste. The easy completion of the first side mission gave Chen Ge a boost of confidence. He put on his raincoat and left the dormitory. He had done everything he could there, so there was no point in staying.

There are three side missions left: the Sealed Classroom, the Deep Well, and the Fifth Cubicle in the Toilet.

The Fifth Cubicle in the Toilet appeared to be inside the education block. Chen Ge had been to the dormitory's toilets, and they only had four cubicles. If the office building's layout was similar to the dormitory's, then only the education block's toilets fit the mission description.

Chen Ge glanced at his phone. He had arrived at Mu Yang High School at 8 pm. Technically, the Pen Spirit game should not have taken too long, but the time showed that it was now almost 9 pm.

There are three hours left until midnight. One hour for each mission, should be fine. Chen Ge's plan was to finish all the side missions as soon as possible and find a corner to hide in until dawn arrived.

When he stood before the education block again, Chen Ge had a weird feeling that the thing that sat before him was not an abandoned building but a giant coffin that housed plenty of dead bodies.

The side mission did not specify the exact location of the toilet. There are three stories to this block, and this means that any one of the toilets on the three levels could be my mission location. Chen Ge turned on his flashlight and entered the building.

Passing through empty classrooms at night caused Chen Ge's skin to crawl. He was afraid that once he turned, he would see something that shouldn't exist inside the classroom. He rushed toward the end of the corridor and entered the first floor's toilet.

The place was spared from the fire and the interior remained the same as it was several years ago. The flooring was cracked and weeds could be seen peeking through the cracks. There were a brownish stain on the wall and the sole window in the room was creaking eerily.

“Focus on the mission, there’s no time to waste.”

All of the toilets inside the education block had 6 cubicles. Years of abandonment meant that most of cubicle doors were broken and Chen Ge could look into the cubicles without even opening the door.

With the mallet in his hand, Chen Ge walked past the six cubicles. The earlier four cubicles had nothing wrong about them but the fifth and sixth cubicles caught his attention. The doors to these two cubicles were shut and with a slight push, Chen Ge realized with a start that they were locked.

Normally, the door is locked only because someone is occupying the cubicle. However, that could not be true here. The school has been abandoned for three years already. Even if something is occupying the cubicles, it cannot be ‘human’. In any case, I’d better take a closer look.

Chen Ge smashed at the sixth door with his mallet, and the door fell open. Before Chen Ge could react, several dark shadows charged at him.

“What is that?” He jumped back to avoid them. He shone his flashlight at his ‘assailant’, and Chen Ge was embarrassed to realize it was merely the cleaning equipment. After recovering from the fake scare, Chen Ge picked the mops and brooms off the floor and shoved them back into the cubicle. He found the same thing in the next cubicle. All six of the cubicles on the first floor were normal, which meant that his mission venue was on another floor.

After exiting the toilet, Chen Ge looked over with shoulder with uncertainty. The cubicle doors creaked on their hinges like people waving at him.

This would create quite a scary effect inside the Haunted House. Chen Ge made a mental note to remember this for the future and headed up the stairs to the second floor. It had the same layout as the first-floor toilet, but the window was boarded up. Once Chen Ge stepped into the space, he felt weirdly pressured.

This should be the place then.

Probably because the window was boarded up, the toilet was better preserved than the first floor one; there was not much change compared to how it was several years ago. He walked to the first cubicle, and before even pushing the door open, he heard footsteps coming from the corridor outside.

However, due to the interruption from the rain, he could not really tell for sure. *Is someone running in the corridor?*

He hid in a corner of the toilet and raised his mallet in a guarded posture in case someone decided to rush into the room. Nothing like that happened.

As time moves toward midnight, the school is slowly starting to change, like it is coming alive. Looks like I will need to pick up my pace. Chen Ge stopped hesitating and pushed open the first four cubicles in one go. When he stood before the fifth cubicle, the footsteps in the corridor started again, and he heard it clearly this time. There were two sets of footsteps.

The mission description for the Fifth Cubicle in the Toilet stated that a red shadow would appear at midnight, was that it?