

## Horrors 91

### Chapter 91: Increasing Popularity

Reading the mission clear message, Chen Ge sighed in relief. This Trial Mission with a two-star scream factor had been easier than he anticipated, but that was probably because the spirits inside Mu Yang High School meant him no harm.

When he was halfway through the mission, he had already noticed that the residents of Mu Yang High School were not baleful specters. Including the Pen Spirit, they had no malicious intent. What had happened to Fan Yu's father was merely karma.

The most difficult side missions were definitely the classroom and the deep well. Even now, he still had not truly uncovered the mystery of the Sealed Classroom. He did go in to experience it once, and thankfully, the spirits inside did not make things too difficult for him. The difficulty of the Deep Well mission was high as well. Even with the aid of the police, they had dug for a whole night before locating the well before dawn. If he had attempted that alone, he definitely would have failed the mission.

Chen Ge felt satisfied with the rewards. He did not mind too much about the unlocked hidden item. According to legend, Pen Spirits could predict the future, but his Pen Spirit did not seem to be knowledgeable about anything and had no principles or morals.

The rain that had continued throughout the night finally stopped. The police did not forget to praise Chen Ge for his contribution. After taking his testimony, they drove him home. The emergency call and a whole night of digging had led to tired officers. Inside the car, the one sitting next to Chen Ge was falling asleep. Chen Ge nudged his own body to the door to make space for the officer. The journey home was silent.

Chen Ge arrived at New Century Park at 6 am. It could have been the Yin Yang Vision or constant exposure to spirits, but Chen Ge felt incredibly cold. He lay in his bed, but sleep would not come. He turned to his phone and was shocked to realize there were more than ten unanswered calls and unread messages.

Most of them came from He San, mainly asking about his safety and whether he needed to call the police. At the bottom of the inbox was a message from Doctor Gao. The good doctor said that Fan Yu's symptoms might be related to the people around him, and he advised Chen Ge to pay closer attention to such individuals in the boy's life.

The message was sent at 12:30 am. By then, Fan Yu's aunt had come clean to Chen Ge. After replying to both He San and Doctor Gao, Chen Ge opened the video-sharing app and clicked into his personal page.

*A four-hour livestream but not a word with the chat, and I even closed the stream several times in the middle without warning. I can only imagine the damage that was done to my popularity.*

After detaining Fan Yu's aunt, Chen Ge had closed the livestream in deference to Fan Yu's privacy and future. He did not have the time to explain the situation to his viewers; his attention had been required elsewhere.

After loading the main page, Chen Ge glanced at the interface and was shocked to realize that his livestream's followers had increased to 39,000 users.

*I remember, before the livestream, I had less than 10,000 followers. What happened last night during the livestream?*

He had been so occupied with the side mission that he had allowed the livestream to play on its own. He did not think too much of it, so he was surprised by this sudden reward.

Just as Chen Ge was trying to figure out what had happened, He San's call came. As he answered it, he could hear the commotion on the other side. "Boss! I knew you're still alive!"

Chen Ge ignored He San's celebration and asked directly, "What happened last night during my livestream? Why did my followers and views grow so tremendously?"

"Since you started your livestream last night, the number has been growing, but it was incredibly slow until you started to play the Pen Spirit game. Someone created a thread on the app forum exposing Qin Guang for his plagiarism and then even attached your first livestream." He San's voice turned sharp from indignation. "Qin Guang's livestream plagiarized your content down to the analysis, set, and even the identity of the killer, who was played by an actor! The evidence was right before their eyes, but Qin Guang's fans refused to admit it. They started to slander your name in the thread, saying that it was you who was mimicking their idol."

"Probably just the 50-cent army <sup>1</sup>, nothing unusual. Then what happened next?"

"Many viewers went to Qin Guang's livestream to demand an explanation, but Qin Guang pretended not to have seen them. Not only that, he banned any viewers who brought up your name. However, with his high popularity and the all-in promotion by the platform, there were 800,000 viewers at the start of his livestream, and with the chat scrolling so fast, his team missed some of your mentions. Thus, a number of his viewers who were curious came over to your livestream." He San got increasingly excited. "The highest viewers during your livestream was 50,000 but it was the combination of passersby, paid viewers, Qin Guang's fans, and your own fans; it was a mess! You don't have any mods in your livestream, so even after the livestream had stopped, the chat kept going for another half an hour. By the way, thanks to this chaos, your livestream entered the Popular Ranking for the midnight session. Congratulations, not many newbie hosts can enter that ranking so early in their career."

Chen Ge could imagine the chaos in his livestream last night, but it was a blessing in disguise since his follower number did have a tremendous increase. After all, he was not lacking in content but exposure.

"Slow down. After all, that was just my second livestream." Chen Ge talked for a few more minutes with He San before hanging up.

He looked at the private messages that he had received from the other users of the app. Most of them were curses, but there were a few who could not stand Qin Guang's bullying and chose to send Chen Ge their support.

Near the bottom of his inbox, Chen Ge recognized a familiar user handler. The profile picture was similar to the studio that had harassed him before. The message warned him to not resort to dirty tricks, or he would make sure Chen Ge was unable to survive on this platform.

If another host saw this, they might have been afraid, but Chen Ge was different. Livestreaming and posting short videos were merely ways for him to promote his Haunted House. After blocking this account, Chen Ge exited the app and picked up the black phone.

“Mu Yang High School (Scream Factor 2 Stars): The setting up of the scenario has been completed, you can now go down to the subterranean level to visit it.

“Warning: Mu Yang High School is considered part of the four-star scenario, School of the Afterlife; its space is twice the size of a normal scenario. Please familiarize yourself with the interior layout before putting it to use.”

After looking at the message on the phone, Chen Ge sat up in bed. *The size is twice normal scenario's? Wait... don't tell me, the whole of Mu Yang High School has been moved here?*

He put on his shoes and ran to the first floor, peeled off the wooden boards, and peered downward.

The abandoned underground parking lot had been given a new look. The stairs had signs of being charred, the darkened corridor was littered with unfinished test papers, the doors to the classrooms creaked in the darkness, and shadows could be seen flitting between the upturned tables.

## **Chapter 92: Request**

The scenery that unfolded before him surprised even Chen Ge, the Haunted House's owner. The size of Mu Yang High School's scenario was so much larger than Murder by Midnight. As he took a step into it, a cold draft caressed the back of Chen Ge's neck. It made him feel unsettled, like something might jump out at him from the dark at any moment.

*Four classrooms, corridors, toilets, and offices...*

Everything that Mu Yang High School had was perfectly replicated inside Chen Ge's Haunted House, but the layout was rearranged so that it was all closer together.

Walking down the dim corridor, Chen Ge could not help himself from turning to look into the classrooms on both sides. The walls beyond the windows were cement wall, and there could not be drafts underground, but the windows kept on creaking like they were touched by the wind.

The first few classrooms were creepy but still acceptable; however, when Chen Ge reached the sealed classroom at the end of the corridor, the hairs on his body stood up. This was the first time he had felt such intense fear inside his own Haunted House.

This classroom reminded him of the sealed classroom at Mu Yang High School, but it was not completely the same. Every table had writing scrawled all over it with red paint, but more scarily, there was a set of school uniform sitting on each chair.

The uniform was a perfect match to the uniforms Chen Ge had seen in the group photo taken with Fan Yu's father. The only difference was that, in the picture, all the students were facing away from the camera, but in this classroom, all the uniforms were turned toward Chen Ge, who stood at the door.

After taking a deep breath, Chen Ge forced himself to walk into the room. Standing at the lectern, looking down at the room, the rows of chairs felt like they were seated with students.

*Why did only this classroom come with school uniforms? Could these uniforms represent the lingering spirits that remained here?* Chen Ge counted the school uniform silently; there were twenty-four uniforms in total.

*After completing the Murder by Midnight Trial Mission, the Haunted House's scenario became the new home for Xiaoxiao's family. If I follow this similar train of thought...* Chen Ge's face twitched with discomfort. It meant that there were twenty-four lingering spirits who had moved into his Haunted House.

*Then again, I might be wrong.* Chen Ge exited the classroom, closed the door, and continued to move forward.

At the end of the corridor was the toilet, and a few steps past that brought Chen Ge to the first junction. The left turn led to the office area while right led to the female dormitory.

Chen Ge took the right turn. He only took several steps when the corridor turned narrow. The rooms on both sides felt like they were closing in on him, and at the end of the corridor was another junction.

*Just a two-star scenario is already so complicated. If I unlock a few more scenarios, this underground parking lot will definitely become a Maze of Terror.*

He pushed open a random door, and the interior was designed like a crime scene.

It was worth noting that Chen Ge discovered a row of chairs placed side by side in the second last bedroom, and several pieces of paper and a greatly damaged ballpoint pen were placed on top of one of them.

*This is the hidden item for unlocking Mu Yang High School's scenario?* Chen Ge picked up the ballpoint pen gingerly. It was so fragile that it looked like it could crack at any moment. *Hidden items seem to have their own purpose. Wang Qi's Hidden Person Notice helped me befriend Xiaoxiao's family, and they now help me maintain the Murder by Midnight scenario. Could it be possible that this ballpoint pen will help me win the favour of the students in the sealed classroom?*

Chen Ge could not figure out how. Eventually, he exited the scenario with the ballpoint pen in hand. He returned to the staff breakroom to fix the pen with tape.

"Pen Spirit, Pen Spirit, I know you hold a grudge against me, but I've fixed your pen. If you have forgiven me, please draw a circle on the paper."

"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..."

To solve the mystery related to the sealed classroom, asking the Pen Spirit would be the most direct solution. However, no matter how hard Chen Ge chanted its invocation, the Pen Spirit refused to answer.

"Why so silent? I'm also a victim in this case, okay?"

Chen Ge had no choice but to return the pen to the female dormitory. He took a tour around the place before returning to the first floor.

*The twenty-four uniforms in the sealed classroom were scary, but the impact was not enough. When I have time, I should update the models in the Night of the Living Room, put the uniforms on them, and placed them in the classroom. That should up the fear factor quite a bit.* Chen Ge closed the wooden boards and was about to return to bed when his phone rang.

He turned to take a look and was surprised to see that it was from Inspector Lee.

“Uncle San Bao? How can I help you?” When Chen Ge returned from Mu Yang High School, Inspector Lee had stayed. He seemed to have been talking with the officers from the main city’s investigation team.

“If you’re not too busy, do you mind coming to the district police station? The killer wants to talk to you.”

“Me?” Chen Ge was confused, but he still agreed so as to give face to Inspector Lee. “Okay, I’ll be there in a minute.”

When he arrived, a familiar officer led Chen Ge to the interrogation room. Fan Yu’s aunt was sitting in the chair, her hands in cuffs.

“The autopsy for the bodies is still going on. The suspect’s emotions are very unstable, and she refuses to say anything. Her only demand is to talk to you in person, and that was why I called you.” The middle-aged officer in the interrogation room stood up and shook Chen Ge’s hand. “Then, I shall leave you to you.”

“I’ll try my best.” Chen Ge walked to Fan Yu’s aunt. In just one night, she seemed to have gotten even wearier than usual. Her head was lowered, and her hair covered her face.

When she felt someone approach, the woman’s eyes, which had been distracted earlier, started to focus on Chen Ge. They spoke of complicated emotions.

“You asked for me?” As Chen Ge tried to get near, he was stopped by the officer, who wished for him to maintain a safe distance.

Fan Yu’s aunt nodded slightly. She was silent for a long time, and the first sentence out of her mouth surprised Chen Ge. “Do you have the drawing I gave you in the third-floor toilets?”

If she did not bring this up, Chen Ge would have forgotten all about it already. He retrieved the drawing from his pocket and placed it before Fan Yu’s aunt. Looking at the weird drawing, Fan Yu’s aunt did not feel afraid. In fact, it felt like she treated it like some kind of treasure. Then again, that was too be expected; after all, when her husband and children passed away, it was with these drawings that she slowly walked out from her despair.

Eventually Fan Yu’s aunt’s spoke. “I’ve done everything I could for Fan Yu for three years, but the first living person who showed up in his drawing is you, how is that fair?”

“Things might not be as simple as you think. Fan Yu probably thinks I’m similar him.” Chen Ge pointed at his eyes. “We can see the same thing.”

“Is that so?” Fan Yu’s aunt lowered her head again, and the interrogation room became quiet.

“Is this why you called me here?” Chen Ge folded the drawing up neatly.

After ten minutes, Fan Yu’s aunt collected herself; it was as if she had come to a decision. She told Chen Ge in a soft voice, “I am Fan Yu’s only remaining family, and I will have to leave him soon. The boy has a weird personality and is unable to make any friends. I do not ask that you take him on, but I plead that you go visit him when you have time. Talk to him and make sure he isn’t bullied by the other kids.”

### **Chapter 93: Twenty-four Names**

Regardless of what Fan Yu’s aunt had done in the past, at least at that moment, she was putting Fan Yu first.

“I will try my best to watch out for the boy,” Chen Ge promised without hesitation. In this whole incident, Fan Yu was the most innocent.

“Actually, you don’t need to worry so much.” The officer behind the desk also walked over to say, “We have already contacted child services. If you truly repent, you might still have the chance to see your child in the future.”

“My child?” Fan Yu’s aunt looked at that officer, and her blank expression slowly shifted. Her lips fell open as she stared at a spot above the officer’s shoulder, and for some reason, she smiled. “Okay, I will tell you everything I know.”

They then entered the normal interrogation process. Chen Ge felt he was not needed there anymore, so he asked to leave. After exiting the station, he hailed a cab to go to Fan Yu’s home.

The incident might appear to have reached its conclusion on the surface, but there was still a huge question that had not been solved, a question that only Chen Ge knew and only Fan Yu could provide the answer to.

The sun was coming up, but its rays seemed to be unable to penetrate the maze-like alleyways. After exiting the taxi, Chen Ge walked deeper into the alleys, following his memory.

Eventually, he found the place that Fan Yu’s aunt rented. He knocked several times on the second-floor door before he heard the lock being moved from within, and the door opened a sliver. Chen Ge pushed it open, and to his surprise, there was no one standing behind the door. He stood at the entrance for a long time, and even with the sunlight falling on him, he did not feel a trace of warmth.

“Fan Yu?” Chen Ge stepped into the room, and he felt even chiller. The living room and kitchen were empty. Chen Ge shuffled toward the bedroom. He tried to push on the door, and similar to before, the door was not locked and was pushed open easily.

Heavy curtains blocked all the light in the room, and the lights were not on. The place was dim, and the floor was littered with paper. Chen Ge picked up a random piece, and it was still a drawing of a black house crowded with red people.

“Why did you toss these drawings away? Are you not satisfied with them?” Chen Ge held the drawing in his hands while he looked toward the table. Fan Yu sat on the chair, facing away from him. The boy looked like he was spacing out.

Chen Ge avoided the drawings on the floor carefully, and when he walked closer, he saw there was one last drawing that was left on the table. On the white paper, a black crayon was used to draw the outline of a house, and a small black figure was standing isolated in the middle of it.

“What happened to the red people?”

Chen Ge did not expect Fan Yu to answer, but Fan Yu turned his head to look at him and whispered, “They have found a new home.”

“Meaning, they have moved away?” Chen Ge was reminded of the twenty-four uniforms he had seen inside his Haunted House and something clicked. “Are you friends with them?”

The boy shook his head. With his eyes on his drawing, Fan Yu reached into his drawer to pull out a paper box to give Chen Ge.

“For me?” Chen Ge looked into the box, and inside sat twenty-four school name tags with twenty-four different names. In the middle of the box was a photo group, and twenty-four students stood facing away from the camera.

These twenty-four name tags should reveal the mystery behind the sealed classroom, and now Fan Yu had handed them to Chen Ge. After surrendering the box, Fan Yu stopped saying anything. Chen Ge had no idea what the boy was thinking.

Neither of them said anything. Looking at Fan Yu, Chen Ge did not have the heart to ask the question that was on his mind. Suddenly footsteps came from the corridor, and soon, a man and woman appeared at the door.

“This should be the place.”

“Why isn’t the door locked? Fan Yu? Are you inside?”

Hearing them, Chen Ge ran out to see what was wrong. “And you are?”

“We are workers from Jiujiang Children’s Home; this is our identification. We are here to take Fan Yu for a physical check-up and then follow up on the documentation for his future,” the woman explained as they both looked at Chen Ge with suspicion. They did not understand why an unknown man had appeared at Fan Yu’s home.

“Fan Yu is inside the bedroom. The boy is very independent, so please do take care of him.”

“We will; that is our job.” The woman entered the bedroom to fetch Fan Yu while the man stood outside to keep an eye on Chen Ge. They did not seem to trust him. Realizing that the woman had stepped into this territory, Fan Yu’s reaction was rather agitated. He grabbed the drawing on the table and ran outside like he was trying to make an escape.

“Grab him!” the woman yelled from inside the house. The man at the door heard her, and when Fan Yu ran to his side, he grabbed at the boy’s arm. The man was experienced at dealing with troublesome

children. Very easily, he pinned down Fan Yu's arms. This way, he would not be scratched by Fan Yu, and Fan Yu had no opportunity of harming himself.

Fan Yu struggled like his life depended on it. This greatly unsettled Chen Ge, and after some negotiation with the man, he finally released Fan Yu. Fan Yu, who was released, did not attempt to make another escape. He gripped the drawing silently, like he knew running would be futile.

Watching Fan Yu being led away, Chen Ge could not hold it in anymore. He chased after the boy and squatted down before him to ask a question that had troubled him for a long time.

"You know heaven is inside the well, and you witnessed everything, so why didn't you say anything?" Chen Ge had never treated Fan Yu as a normal boy—the house of red people had prevented him from doing that.

A blank-faced Fan Yu thought about it for a while when he heard Chen Ge's question. In the end, he did not answer but raised his head to flash an innocent smile at Chen Ge.

As he watched Fan Yu leave, Chen Ge's back started to become drenched with sweat. This was the first time he had seen the boy smile. Hugging the paper box with twenty-four names and the photo that had been given to him by Fan Yu, Chen Ge returned to New Century Park.

The trip to the police station and then Fan Yu's place had taken up plenty of time. When he arrived at New Century Park, it was already past 10:30 am.

After the whole night of rain, the sun was shining brightly. Chen Ge's mood also improved when he saw the crowd that had gathered inside the park. As he entered the park, he immediately noticed the crowd that had formed outside his Haunted House.

Initially, he had thought those were customers, but he realized he was wrong when he got closer. None of them were lining up for tickets but very unreasonably blocked the entrance from other real visitors.

*What's happening?* Chen Ge walked over and realized that Uncle Xu was also there, negotiating with the unruly crowd.

When they saw Chen Ge approach, they quickly surrounded him.

### **Chapter 94: New Customers**

"Xiao Chen, where have you been? Why are you so late for work?" Uncle Xu pulled Chen Ge to stand behind him, afraid that the mob might harm the young man.

"I just came back from the district station; I was helping the police with a murder case."

"Huh?" Not only Uncle Xu, even the mob who surrounded Chen Ge was shocked. Normally, the reason given for truancy was either a traffic jam or stomach ache; being involved in a murder case was truly an excuse they had not heard about before.

"Murder case?" Uncle Xu looked at Chen Ge with shock and had forgotten the urgent matter at hand.



“Yup, but the case is different from the earlier murder at the apartment; it probably won’t be broadcasted on the mass media.”

*There was an earlier murder?* The raging mob’s aggression suddenly dwindled.

“Alright, leave this to me.” Chen Ge stood facing the crowd and said, “You guys are looking for me?”

With just one question, Chen Ge managed to extinguish the little momentum the mob had left. The crowd that blocked the entrance to the Haunted House looked at each other before shoving out a middle-aged man, who was shortest among them, to face Chen Ge.

“We are from Qin Guang’s studio. Last night, you employed unethical tactics by hiring a 50-cent army to spread rumors that are damaging to Qin Guang’s reputation.”

“I’m the one who employed unethical tactics? You people sure know how to create story. Who the real unethical plagiarist here is, you know yourselves.” Chen Ge cut the man off instantly. “If there’s nothing else, please leave the premises; you are interrupting my business.”

“Qin Guang merely chose to have the livestream at the same location as you. That is not a basis for you to claim that he plagiarized your work simply because you happened to shoot at the location first.” The middle-aged man stood his ground and tried to argue with Chen Ge.

“A simple comparison between our livestreams show that Qin Guang mimicked even my starting analysis while trapped inside the bedroom. If that is not plagiarism, what is?”

“At most, he only copied your beginning. The plot that developed after that was his own creativity. Of course, it cannot be called plagiarism. At the very worst, you can call it a homage.”

Chen Ge had never seen such a shameless person before. He knew reasoning with them would be a waste of time, so he walked past them to open the gate and prepare for business.

“You are new to the scene, so we understand your drive to succeed, but you have to know that this job is not that easy.” The middle-aged man pulled out a document from his bag. Chen Ge had initially thought it was some kind of lawyer’s letter, but he had overestimated his opponent’s conviction.

“You are not from this field, so you don’t understand certain things—that’s fine—but most established hosts are made with gold and popularity. It might appear that you have caught some popularity for now, but the platform will never support a newcomer and abandon Qin Guang because Qin Guang is the platform’s key promoter. His success is tied to the success of the platform itself.” The middle-aged man waved the document in his hand. “If you agree to stop the malicious attacks against Qin Guang and post a public apology on your personal account, we will compensate you accordingly. However, if you insist on walking down the wrong place and harassing Qin Guang and any of his affiliates to brush up the popularity of your own livestream, we will contact the platform to block you from all of its channels.”

“Don’t try to shift the blame onto the viewers; they are completely innocent. If anything, the viewers simply cannot stomach the open bullying and came to support me.” Chen Ge did not give a damn about the threat. After all, the platform had never helped him once before. Even he himself did not know how he had managed to achieve his current popularity.

“Being rash benefits no one, why don’t you think about it first?” The middle-aged man’s attitude softened; the unreasonableness that was evident before Chen Ge arrived had completely disappeared. Around six of them had come to create trouble for Chen Ge, but the first sentence out of the man’s lips when he arrived had thrown a wrench into their plan. Then again, they could not totally be blamed. Any normal person would be cautioned when they realized that the person they were dealing with had been involved in not one but two murder cases.

“There’s nothing to consider. I’ve already discovered the unique selling point of my livestream and videos. Even if I’m forced to leave this platform, I’ll just regain my follower base elsewhere.” Chen Ge chased the people from Qin Guang’s studio aside and informed Xu Wan to start preparing for work.

He had raced about the whole night, so he was tired. He sat in the ticket booth selling tickets. After the first few waves of visitors exited the Haunted House, the people from Qin Guang’s studio returned.

“You people sure are insistent! If you’re not here to visit the Haunted House, please move aside; you’re blocking the path for the real visitors!” Even a saint would lose their temper when pushed too hard. Chen Ge had been polite enough, but these people kept testing his patience.

“Who said we’re not here to visit the Haunted House? We also wish to experience the place that is dubbed the scariest Haunted House in Jiujiang.” Two young men from the studio with backpacks blocked the gate.

“You also want to visit the Haunted House?” Naturally, Chen Ge suspected that these people were up to no good.

“If you’re afraid that we might expose your fake advertising, then fine, we won’t enter.” Of the two young men, one was extremely well-built. He wore a tank top to purposely reveal his body that was the result of constant weight training.

Honestly, Chen Ge was a bit taunted by this guy. “Let me remind you, the last person who made a claim like yours came out lying on his back.”

“You’ve only managed to arouse my interest even more.” Standing beside the muscular man was a meek looking bespectacled man. “I’ve watched scary movies since I was young. Before being recruited by Brother Qin, I was part of a scary movie film crew. Alas, most of the movie settings were too fake; they were barely challenging.”

“I do love customers like yourself who are constantly searching for a greater scare.” Chen Ge pulled the curtain back. “Come in then, remember to sign the disclaimer agreement.”

Since there were willing lab rats, Chen Ge naturally would not send them away. Even the smile on his face had turned several degrees sincerer.

When Uncle Xu saw the smile on Chen Ge’s face, he shivered involuntarily, and the image of the forensic science students from Jiujiang Medical University lying weakly on the floor appeared in his mind.

Uncle Xu coughed and pulled him to the side. “Xiao Chen, don’t go overboard. Remember, they are still park visitors.”

Before Chen Ge could reply, the bespectacled young man thought that he had seen through their plot and scoffed with derision, “Well, well, well. That’s some pretty good acting. The experience has started even before we enter the Haunted House?”

“Before I arrived, I saw the reviews on the Haunted House, and many people said that the owner knows a bit of psychology. It looks like they weren’t lying.”

Uncle Xu looked at the young man with a speechless expression on his face. *I’m trying to help you here. If not for the fact you might die inside there, I would not have cared about you!*

“Uncle Xu, I know the limits. Don’t worry.” Chen Ge led the two young men into the Haunted House personally and saw them sign the disclaimer agreement.

The larger, muscular man was called Zhu Jianing, and the bespectacled man was Fei Youliang.

### **Chapter 95: All School Uniforms**

“When you’re inside, no photos or filming. There are four different scenarios for you to experience; they are the Sealed Classroom, the Fifth Cubicle in the Toilet, the Pen Spirit, and the Deep Well. The clues to the exit are hidden within these four scenarios. You’ll need to experience all of them before you can find the exit.” Chen Ge looked through their disclaimer agreement repeatedly. He was so careful because the agreements might serve their purpose soon enough.

“This is not our first Haunted House; we know all that.” Fei Youliang pushed on his spectacles and peered inside the Haunted House. “At least the suspenseful environment is not bad.”

“In that case, I will not waste my breath anymore.” Chen Ge had intended to make some small introduction to each of the small scenarios, but he decided that would not be necessary. “Follow me.”

Chen Ge led the two young men to the entrance to Night of the Living Dead on the first floor. The two saw the dilapidated setting and less than desirable mannequins that populated the scenario.

“The style is from ten years back.”

“Honestly, with set pieces like these, I feel like I can sue you for overcharging me for the entrance ticket.”

Zhu Jianing and Fei Youliang wandered into the Night of the Living Dead scenario and touched the dust that had gathered on the mannequins. “Just how long has this place been deserted?”

“Looks like the business is dying. I should have known that you would have hired the same 50-cent army to fill the comments with good reviews.”

“Are you two done?” Chen Ge raised the wooden boards from the floor. “The entrance is here.”

“It’s underground?” The two young men did not feel weirded out. They walked out of the Night of the Living Dead scenario with their backpacks and stopped before the staircase that led down the stairs.

The dark corridor led into an abyss. The doors to the classrooms on both sides creaked creepily, and even before they got down the stairs, a chilling wind surged from within to caress their skin.

“Now... this is... better.”

As the two young men entered the Mu Yang High School scenario, Chen Ge yelled from the entrance, “If you’re really afraid, yell for help at the cameras—the workers will come help you.”

After closing the boards, Chen Ge suddenly realized that there was no surveillance installed in the Mu Yang High School scenario, and there was not really an exit. He had just been saying that earlier out of habit. *Looks like I better go in to join them. Hopefully, their minds are still intact when I reach them.*

He had Xu Wan stay at the door to maintain the order. He put on the Doctor Skull-cracker outfit and entered the main control room to switch the background music to Black Friday before entering the Mu Yang High School scenario with the box of nametags given to him by Fan Yu.

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After Zhu Jianing and Fei Youliang descended the staircase, they stayed near the entrance. Both of them waited until Chen Ge closed the wooden boards before they made a signal and retrieved Bluetooth cameras from their backpacks and pinned them on their chests.

“Each of us will record our side. We’ll film everything inside his Haunted House, and after we solve it, we’ll post the guide online.”

“Will that achieve anything?”

“For local Haunted Houses like this one, the design and traps of the scenarios are considered business secrets because they depend on them to attract visitors. If the guide is already posted online, then it would have lost all its allure. This is why Haunted Houses ban the usage of cameras and video recorders. They have to keep the mystery and anticipation up for future visitors.” Fei Youliang fixed his camera and walked in front. “After shooting the video, we’ll edit it to make it as boring as possible, and then after posting it online, we’ll hire some 50-cent army to swamp his comments with bad reviews.”

“Okay.” After he looked around, Zhu Jianing added, “But I have to say, the man has put a lot of effort into his setting; it does feel like we’re at an abandoned high school.”

“At the end of the day, it is still fake. In comparison to the 3D scary movies I’ve seen, this is nothing.” Fei Youliang was not afraid; if anything, he was bored. “Let’s get this over with.”

The two walked down the dim corridor. On each side of them were empty classrooms. The doors creaked on their hinges, and weird noises occasionally drifted out from the classrooms.

“Do you think the exit will be inside these two classrooms beside the entrance? After all, the comments did say that the boss is a master manipulator.”

“That’s your first mistake. If you focus too hard on searching for the exit, you will have fallen for the man’s scheme.” When Fei Youliang was talking, he did not forget to maintain the balance of his upper body. Both he and Zhu Jianing were expert cameramen.

“You’re right. Thankfully, you came with me.”

“In reality, Haunted Houses are very boring. It’s just people scaring people, and if you take it too seriously, you lose.”

The end of the dark corridor was still nowhere to be seen. Even though they said that they were not afraid, their progress was glacially slow. The signs of a fire could be seen everywhere, and the unique scent of burning was mixed in the stall air.

As living humans entered the scenario, the atmosphere inside Mu Yang High School slowly changed. In an unseen corner, many pairs of eyes slowly opened.

Fei Youliang, who walked forward, was a scary movie aficionado. As authentic as the setting was, it was not scary enough to make him feel afraid yet. In comparison, the muscular man, Zhu Jianing, started to wilt under pressure. He hid himself behind Fei Youliang, and his eyes kept wandering about to the dark corners.

The background music was not that scary, but it made his heartrate race and his breathing uneven. Fei Youliang suddenly stopped, causing Zhu Jianing to walk into the man's back.

"What's wrong?" Zhu Jianing said in a volume that he did not realize had become a whisper.

"This classroom, it's different from the rest." Fei Youliang stood at the door of the sealed classroom. Looking at the dark-colored uniforms that filled the chairs, he had a weird feeling that the classroom was filled with students.

"There are all these uniforms." Zhu Jianing was even more scared than Fei Youliang; just a glance through the window was enough to make him shiver. "Should we go to someplace else first?"

"Don't be scared. A worker at the Haunted House should be hiding inside this room, and that's why its decor is different from the others." Fei Youliang could still maintain his calmness. "The man said that we must experience the four scenarios, and this should be one of them. This is the selling point of the Haunted House; we have to record it and then solve it so that we can post it online."

While he was talking, the door slowly opened on its own like being moved by an invisible hand.

"There must be some kind of control mechanism. It's common equipment used in the shooting of scary movies." Fei Youliang slapped Zhu Jianing on his arm. "Come on, let's go catch some ghosts."

"You're right, but..." Zhu Jianing said with a head full of cold sweat, "I've taken a look around, and there're only school uniforms inside the room; there's no space for anyone to hide."

"There's probably some hidden compartment. Be careful. This means that the actor might come out to scare you from unexpected corners." Fei Youliang and Zhu Jianing dawdled outside the classroom for a long time before finally entering it.

## **Chapter 96: Game Start**

The Sealed Classroom was a place that even Chen Ge did not want to stay in for long, but Fei Youliang and Zhu Jianing entered it easily. There was a weird smell in the air. Entering the room was like going underwater; there was an inexplicable pressure pressing down on them, causing their breathing to become rather uneven.

"Youliang, should I wait for you outside?" The classroom was darker than the corridor. Zhu Jianing, who stood behind Fei Youliang, had a frightened grimace on his face, and his forehead was covered with sweat.

"What did we promise each other before entering the Haunted House? We said we'd never abandon each other, but now you're already giving up?" Fei Youliang was getting increasingly agitated. The uniforms that littered the room were not unlike the props that were used in scary movies; for some reason, he felt apprehensive about going near them.

Zhu Jianing did not notice that his teammate's confidence had been shattered. He whispered from behind him, "Where do you think the Haunted House's worker will be hiding? Will they jump up from underneath the uniforms?"

"Not clear, but they would normally do something like that." Fei Youliang nudged his way to the lectern. He gripped his fists as he walked down the rows of tables, but nothing scary happened. "It does not seem like there's anyone hiding here."

"But if there's no one hiding here, why waste so many resources to create such a large and detailed set? There is what looks like blood writing carved onto the tables, and these old uniforms were purposely left in the room." Zhu Jianing glanced behind him. "Furthermore, the door opened on its own earlier like it was inviting us to come in."

"It was probably the wind." Fei Youliang turned to glare at Zhu Jianing. "If you have time to mumble this nonsense, come and help me look for the hidden mechanism or trick."

"Don't be mad, I'm just helping you analyze the situation..." Zhu Jianing headed in the other direction of the room. Due to his large body, when he walked past one of the tables, he accidentally knocked one of the uniforms to the floor. He did not mind it and did not seem intent on picking it up. He stepped on the uniform and continued to walk until he reached the classroom's backdoor. "There is indeed nothing worth getting scared over; I was expecting something to pounce at me when I passed the tables..."

Zhu Jianing's voice faded out. He turned and realized that the classroom had reverted to its original state.

"When I walked down the row, I remember knocking into one of the uniforms. Youliang, did you pick it up from the floor?"

"A uniform that fell to the floor? How come I didn't notice it?" Fei Youliang stood at the other end of the classroom, a distance of several tables away.

"Was I imagining it?" Zhu Jianing walked back up the row. He stood beside the table that was situated at the center of the room. "I remember it was this uniform that fell to the floor."

He picked the uniform up and waved it once. A weird odor drifted out from it. It smelled like rotten fish.

"This is weird." Zhu Jianing dropped the uniform onto the table and squatted down to inspect the table and chair for hidden mechanisms. He shook the table, and everything seemed normal. Just as he was about to move on, the sound of marbles came from inside the drawer.

“There’s something inside?” Zhu Jianing bent down and leaned into the mouth of the drawer. The dark drawer was stuffed with test papers and textbooks.

“Why was there the sound of marbles? There’s hidden compartment inside this drawer?” He looked into the darkness and reached in to pull out the papers. He only pulled out the first one when he saw two round eyes staring right at him from behind the paper.

“F\*ck!” The sudden scare caused Zhu Jianing, who was half-squatted, to stumble back and knock the two tables behind him out of position.

“What’s wrong?” The commotion shocked Fei Youliang, who was also in the room.

“There’s someone inside the drawer!” Zhu Jianing tried to crawl up from the floor, but his limbs failed him. His face was drained of blood.

“Have you lost your mind? How can a person fit inside a drawer?” Fei Youliang cursed as he went to help his teammate. “It’s probably some kind of prop.”

He pulled out the papers and textbooks from inside the drawer and dropped them onto the floor. “Take a look. Don’t be such a scaredy cat; there’s nothing inside.”

After ten seconds to calm himself down, Zhu Jianing finally climbed up from the floor. “But I really saw a pair of eyes... I’m not lying! I swear on my life!”

“Even if that’s true, it’s just a trick of the Haunted House. Why are you so scared?” Fei Youliang was not that scared to begin with, but what Zhu Jianing said did unsettle him a little. “Fine, let’s leave this room for now.”

The pair escaped in a hurry, leaving behind a trail of chaos.

“Do we need to continue?” Zhu Jianing asked. Looking at the corridor that seemingly had no end, his heart was quivering.

“You’re giving up in less than five minutes? We’re here to ruin this place, not to do promotion for this Haunted House.” Fei Youliang had half a mind to kick Zhu Jianing. “Get a hold of yourself! Why are you acting all scared like a little girl? How are you going to answer to your muscles?”

Then he continued to move forward. Even though Zhu Jianing was afraid, it would be worse to be abandoned or labelled a traitor of Qin Guang’s studio, so he powered on.

As he moved forward, he looked over his shoulder. When he saw the door to the sealed classroom slowly open again, he quickly caught up to Fei Youliang and hissed, “Let’s go, it feels like something is coming out from that classroom!”

The pair ran forward in a hurry. They ignored the toilet and arrived at the first junction.

“Just how big is this set? There’s even a choice of paths?”

Zhu Jianing had completely given up, and Fei Youliang was frowning deeply. He loved scary movies and had visited many Haunted House in his life, but this was the first time he had encountered such a

Haunted House. They had not seen any Haunted House workers in ghost costumes, but the feeling of fear refused to leave. The longer they remained, the stronger that feeling became.

In the Haunted Houses that he visited in the past, he could still see the 'ghosts', and with the appearance of the 'ghosts', he would feel much better because all those 'ghosts' were actors hired by the Haunted House. It told him that the place was fake; it was all a human creation.

However, the Haunted House he was in that day had completely upended his preconception of Haunted Houses. There were no actors so far, but it had managed to create an inexplicable feeling of suspenseful fear, like something incredibly scary might happen at any moment.

"Let's try this way."

The corridor narrowed as Fei Youliang and Zhu Jianing headed toward the female dormitory.

The front few rooms were not scary, and their emotions slowly relaxed as the fear surrounding their hearts slowly disappeared. Then they entered the room with the Pen Spirit game.

In the female bedroom that was preserved like a crime scene, four chairs stood side by side, and several pieces of white paper as well as a ballpoint pen that was glued together with tape sat on one of the chairs.

### **Chapter 97: The Rampaging Pen Spirit**

"This bedroom feels different from the rest," Zhu Jianing commented at the door. The man seemed like he was about to run at any moment. "It has that Escape the Room feel. The clues to the exit are probably hidden here as well, right?"

"No idea, this is the first time I've visited a Haunted House that gave its visitors such a great degree of freedom. The boss sure is confident that no accidents will happen to his customers." Fei Youliang walked to the chairs and picked up a random piece of white paper. On it, it was written "When will I die? How will I die? Who will be the next to die?"

"This looks like the Pen Spirit game, but..." Fei Youliang turned to look at the ballpoint pen on the chair. "Isn't this pen a bit too unconventional?"

"Does it contain some kind of hidden mechanism?" Zhu Jianing also walked over to hold the pen in his palm. He pressed on it for several times and almost broke the pen. "It seems like a normal pen to me."

"Do you still remember what the Haunted House boss said before we came in?"

"There are four scenarios in the Haunted House, and we have to experience them all before we can get the clues to the exit."

"That's right. The clues are hidden in the four small scenarios. Let's take a closer look around. In my experience, there's probably a key or paper note hidden inside this bedroom."

The bedroom was small, and the pair searched every corner but came up with nothing.



“This Haunted House is not that easy to unlock, and the design are incredibly detailed.” Fei Youliang placed the paper on the table. Three of them had writing on, but one was left blank. “Does this mean that we have to play the Pen Spirit game at least once before we can get the answer?”

“Playing the Pen Spirit game inside a Haunted House doesn’t sound like a good idea.” Zhu Jianing was flustered after reading the writing on the sheets of paper.

“Of the four scenarios, this one seems the simplest. If you don’t want to do this, we’ll need to go back to that classroom. Would you prefer that?” Fei Youliang waved his hand impatiently. “Plus, do you really think there is a Pen Spirit in this world? Get over here. We’ll try it once, and if it doesn’t work, we’ll leave.”

Fei Youliang felt something was off, and he felt weirdly uncomfortable, like something was grasping his heart. Zhu Youliang unwillingly walked toward Fei Youliang. They stood on opposite sides of the chairs.

“But I don’t know how the game works.”

“Don’t worry, I’ve seen many movies about the Pen Spirit. I’ve even tried it out a few times at home. It’s just a trick and can be scientifically explained.” Fei Youliang straightened the pen and hovered it over the single paper that was empty. “Cross your fingers over mine and grab the pen tightly.”

“Okay.” Zhu Jianing squatted down beside the chair and did what he was told. “Now what?”

“Just be quiet.” Fei Youliang wrote down “YES” and “NO” on the white paper. When the bedroom became completely quiet, he 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.”

As he finished, a cold blast of wind suddenly shook the half-opened door of the bedroom. The dilapidated door slowly opened to reveal the empty and dim corridor. Zhu Jianing shivered and shrunk involuntarily into the room.

“Stop moving.” Fei Youliang stared at the sharp end of the pen, his body frozen like a statue. The chilling wind streamed through the bedroom. The paper on the floor fluttered like an invisible hand was flipping through them. The temperature dropped, and coldness seeped up from their ankles.

When someone is asked to hold the same position under a highly stressful situation, one’s senses would be heightened. This was not unlike a form of torture for the pair who was in the middle of the Pen Spirit game.

The decrepit bedroom seemed to turn darker, and the dirtied bedsheet moved in the wind like something was crawling out from underneath the bed. Ten minutes later, the pair’s hands, which hung in midair, started to tremble, and a series of dots started to appear on the paper.

Zhu Jianing could not help but ask, “Has the Pen Spirit arrived?”

He could not withstand this kind of tense atmosphere.

“Many movies set the time for Pen Spirit to appear after ten minutes. If there’s no reaction within ten minutes, it means that the game has failed, but this is a made-up rule. Often, people think that the Pen Spirit has arrived, but in reality, it is merely a psychological effect,” Fei Youliang said to calm his

teammate. "This place is one of the four scenarios mentioned by the boss. We'll try to follow his rules for now and see what kind of tricks he can play on us."

As he finished, the ballpoint pen in their hands moved. It was a slight movement, but both of them felt it.

"Was that you?" both asked at the same time, and they managed to see the shock registered on the other person's face.

"It wasn't me," Zhu Jianing denied in a hurry. He had completely recovered from the fear brought on by the pair of eyes, and now this happened. He was in a highly tense state. "Youliang, do you think the real Pen Spirit has arrived?"

"Don't be silly. The Pen Spirit game utilizes the game's format and the environment to create psychological pressure. The elongated time of maintaining a constant posture will cause the pen to appear like it has moved on its own even though it is actually the result of our bodies reacting to the environmental and physiological stimulus," Fei Youliang stated in a tone that sounded like he was persuading himself. "Our subconscious imagines that the pen has moved, and it has influenced our conscious mind."

However, as he finished, the pen moved again, and it was very obvious this time. The pair looked at each other before both turned toward the paper in unison. The little dots on the paper were connected by a line to form an irregular circle.

"F\*ck! It's really here!" Zhu Jianing's first reaction was to pull his hand back, but he was stopped by Fei Youliang.

"Whether or not it is the real Pen Spirit, we have to continue this game."

"Why?"

"If it is the real Pen Spirit, if we end the game without sending it off, we'll be cursed by the Spirit until we die; if it is fake, then there is no reason for us to be afraid, and everything is just a trick arranged by the boss to scare us."

"Then what shall we do next?"

"Try to ask it some questions, and then send the Pen Spirit away," Fei Youliang said calmly.

"What kind of questions we should ask? Questions like the ones written on the other paper?" Zhu Jianing pointed at the pieces of paper that littered the floor.

"That is a trap. We must not ask the Pen Spirit questions that are related to death. Try to ask some random questions."

"Random questions?"

"Yes, let me try." Fei Youliang gripped Zhu Jianing's hand tightly. After a pause, he shushed Zhu Jianing, and he muttered softly, "Pen Spirit, Pen Spirit, can you tell me the name of my future wife?"

To Fei Youliang's surprise, when he finished the question, the wind inside the bedroom suddenly stopped blowing, and an insurmountable pressure started to expand from behind him.

The pen in their hands quivered violently, and soon, three words appeared on the white paper.

"YOU WILL DIE!"

### **Chapter 98: There's Someone Behind You**

"You will die?" Fei Youliang was confused. He had asked about his future wife's name, but why would such a curse come out? There was no connection between them. He made sure he had followed the rules of the Pen Spirit game closely; he did not do anything that should have angered the Pen Spirit.

He thought about it, and an answer came to him. *This must be one of the preset designs. No matter what question I asked, these three words were destined to appear.*

Feeling like he had seen through the boss' trick, the confidence that Fei Youliang had lost earlier started to resurface.

"The method to make these three words appear is interesting. Temporarily, I still don't understand it, but to amplify the fear factor, the boss has forgotten to take care of the situation's sense of logic," he explained. "If it were any other visitor, they probably would have ended the Pen Spirit game or done something taboo to anger the Pen Spirit in their panic, and the appearance of these three words would have heightened their internal suspicion, thinking that the Pen Spirit had really appeared and allowed themselves to be feared. Unfortunately, their visitors today are the two of us. We have made no mistakes along the way, but the answer on the paper still comes up as irrelevant to my question. Therefore, this Pen Spirit game is nothing more than a scary trick."

Even after his long explanation, Fei Youliang realized that Zhu Jianing still had not responded, making him feel like he was talking to a wall.

"Xiao Zhu? Why is your hand so cold?" He raised his head and saw Zhu Jianing was staring dumbly at the space behind him, his mouth wide open and his features twisted in abject fear.

"What are you looking at?"

The expression on Zhu Jianing's face unsettled Fei Youliang. He did not seem to hear his teammate, and his whole body was shivering, just like the broken ballpoint pen they were holding. A bad feeling appeared in Fei Youliang's heart. He had also sensed that the atmosphere in the bedroom had changed. There was an indescribable presence that had joined them in the room, one that had not been there earlier, and it felt like it was just behind him.

He wanted to turn to take a look, but something pressed down on his back, and every muscle in his body tensed. "What's going on? What's behind this?"

Various questions flashed across his mind, and the feeling of wanting to take a look but being afraid of what he might see made the man crazy.

"Xiao Zhu, tell me, what are you seeing? What is behind me?"

A chill soon spread through his body; it felt like he had been dropped into an icy cave. Fei Youliang shivered involuntarily, and various purplish bruises appeared on his skin, like many invisible hands were grabbing him.

The thing behind him felt like it was trying to squeeze itself into his body, and the chilling presence pushing down on his shoulders became heavier and heavier!

Opposite him, Zhu Jianing seemed to use every energy in his body to squeeze out a warning.

“There’s someone behind you!”

“Behind me?”

There were two explanations to this warning; either someone was literally on his back or someone was standing behind him. Fei Youliang’s brain was churning when Zhu Jianing suddenly jumped up from the floor, shook Fei Youliang’s hand off, and ran out the room!

Zhu Jianing did not hesitate or even turn around once in his escape.

Fei Youliang, who was abandoned, still sat dumbly on the floor. The ballpoint pen seemed to have stuck to his hand, and no matter how hard he tried to shake it loose, it simply would not come off. Suddenly, his arm froze like something had taken control of it. Then the pen started to move on its own to write on the white paper.

“YOU WILL DIE! YOU WILL DIE! YOU WILL DIE!”

The series of blood red curses appeared on the white paper. Zhu Jianing had already left, and the one holding the pen was himself. He was certain that he did not move his hand, so this meant that these curses were written by something else in the room.

Even at a time like that, Fei Youliang still managed to maintain his cool. He was an adrenaline junkie, and he did not believe in ghosts. He believed in the rationality and logic of science above all else.

*The thing that Xiao Zhu saw is probably some 3D imaging. Since the chairs are arranged in such a manner, it means that the position of the Pen Spirit game is constant. With the careful manipulation of angles, it would create an authentic looking effect. That should be the tactic employed there, but why would my body be shaking?*

He admitted that he had underestimated this broken ballpoint pen and the Haunted House in general. If given another chance, he would not have entered the Haunted House with so little preparation, and he definitely would have picked a better partner.

The chill on his back continued to spread. As if depleted, the pen in Fei Youliang’s palm finally collapsed and broke into pieces after it finished the crazy scrawls. When the pen left his palm, the last word it wrote was “DIE”.

*Is it over?* Fei Youliang felt his senses returning to his arm. It was then that he finally sighed in relief. His muscles were still rather frozen. He wanted to work some temperature into them, but he realized the pressure on his shoulders had not left, and he was still unable to move!

He had thought he had survived the Pen Spirit game, but the real experience had just started.

*Why can't I move still?* Fei Youliang creaked his neck inch by inch to look over his shoulder. His eyes were narrowed into slits, and he was fully prepared, but when he turned, he saw there was nothing behind him.

*It was all for naught? But then why would Xiao Zhu react in such a crazy manner? What did he actually see?*

Fei Youliang's mind churned hastily, and the pressure on his shoulders increased like someone was stepping on them.

*Shoulders? Stepping on them?*

An image flashed through his mind, and Fei Youliang slowly raised his head.

Raven-black hair falling all over her head, her face bloated from asphyxiation, the eyes popping out of her pockets, anger rimming the edges.

There was a hanging woman standing on Fei Youliang's shoulders!

His lips fell open, but no sound came out. Every hair on his body stood upright, and his glasses slowly slid off his face. Fei Youliang felt as if his heart had stopped at that moment.

"I..."

Before finishing the sentence, the focus in his eyes started to lax, and his body collapsed weakly toward the floor.

...

Chen Ge waited for a few minutes before entering Mu Yang High School's scenario. He did not want to enter too soon after the two previous visitors.

*I haven't heard any screams for so long... looks like I underestimated those two.*

After putting on the skin mask, Chen Ge's first destination was the Sealed Classroom. He placed the paper box with the twenty-four name tags on the lectern. *The tables and chairs have been moved. They have been here and probably stumbled across something.*

What that something was, Chen Ge had no clue. After all, even he had not fully understood the secret of this sealed classroom yet.

After putting the tables and chairs back into position, and the papers and textbooks back into the drawer, Chen Ge suddenly heard footsteps coming from the junction not far ahead. Someone was running through the corridor.

*Who could that be?* He put on the bloodied coat and the mask made from multiple human faces and slowly slipped out of the classroom.

**Chapter 99: Silently Looking at You**

The footsteps sounded hurried, like the person was running away from some scary beast. When Chen Ge exited the classroom, he saw the person responsible for it. The 1.8-meter-tall Zhu Jianing rushed out of the female dormitory, screaming for dear life. His face was blanched, and he raced down the corridor like a mad bull.

*What's going on? Based on his running direction, he probably ran into something scary inside the female dormitory, but there's nothing scary inside the female bedrooms.* Zhu Jianing was already scared out of his mind before Chen Ge even did anything. This gave Chen Ge a sense of helplessness.

*Didn't they say they're not afraid of anything? Weren't they very calm when they entered the scenario? Why is he running amok like a rabid dog now?* Chen Ge also did not know what encounter they had experienced in the newly unlocked scenario. For the sake of safety, he decided to intercept Zhu Jianing to ask him for details.

Zhu Jianing, who had raced out of the female bedroom, did not even have a chance to catch his breath before he saw a shadow moving inside the sealed classroom!

*The school uniform has come alive?* The thought appeared in his mind immediately. He was racing so fast that he did not have the momentum to stop himself. When he reached the classroom door, he saw a bloody shadow slide out from the classroom. Time slowed for Zhu Jianing. His gaze fell on the person's face; it was a face sewn together by many different faces, and every single one of them captured emotions of fear, terror, and pain.

*I knew the classroom was not safe!* Unable to stop himself, Zhu Jianing rammed directly into the wall of the corridor. Ignoring the pain that shot through his body, he pushed himself off the wall and turned to run!

The combination of pain and fear had muddled his mind. Without seeing where he was going, Zhu Jianing saw the first exit and he rushed into it. When he entered, he realized it was the corner toilet.

*Why would he trap himself?* Chen Ge was becoming more and more curious about what exactly this man stumbled across in the female bedroom. *Also, why is he alone? Where is his friend?*

After giving it some thought, Chen Ge thought it was best if he could get the answer directly from the man. He touched the skin mask on his face before entering the toilet. It was not until he was inside the toilet that Zhu Jianing realized he had taken the wrong turn, but there was nothing else he could do. He yanked open a random cubicle, which was the fourth one and hid inside it.

He clamped his palm over his mouth and squeezed his muscular body to fit beside the toilet, his heart racing and his pupils darting about nervously. Zhu Jianing was really scared out of his mind. When they were playing the Pen Spirit game, he had sat across from Fei Youliang, and while his friend was busy analyzing, he had seen the Pen Spirit slowly appear behind Fei Youliang. When the woman's bloated face appeared in his mind, he also felt like the air was getting sucked out of his lungs.

*That wasn't an actor! This Haunted House is really haunted!* They had searched the bedroom, including under the bed, before starting the game. They were sure there was no one hiding inside the room; that poor woman had appeared out of thin air!

*It has to be a ghost!* The woman's face refused to leave Zhu Jianing's mind. Even when he closed his eyes, the woman could be seen swaying from the hanging rope. He felt extremely helpless as he leaned against the wall. He felt weirdly exposed.

*Youliang is still inside the room. The ghost was standing on his shoulders. A scene like that wouldn't appear in real life, would it?* Zhu Jianing took several deep breaths. He felt like he was going light-headed from a lack of oxygen.

*I need to contact the people outside; this Haunted House is problematic.* He tried to tell himself not to be afraid, but his muscular arms kept shivering. He rummaged in his backpack for a long time before he found his phone.

"Xiao Zhu? Why are you calling me? Are you guys done with the video?" The squat middle-aged man's voice came from the other end.

"Brother Yuan, please come in to help me! There are actual ghosts inside this Haunted House!" Zhu Jianing's voice was trembled with tears. "I don't know how long much longer I can hold on. There are god knows how many ghosts looking for me."

"Isn't it normal for Haunted House to have ghosts?" The middle-aged man thought Zhu Jianing was joking.

"Not ghosts played by actors but actual ghosts!" Zhu Jianing hissed urgently. He did not dare raise his voice lest the 'ghosts' outside heard him.

The middle-aged man finally noticed the seriousness in Zhu Jianing's voice. "Give the phone to Youliang, let me talk to him."

"Brother Liang was possessed by the ghost; he is still trapped inside that cursed bedroom."

"Possessed?"

"I saw it with my own eyes; the ghost was standing on his shoulders. It was a hanging ghost, the face was purplish white, and her eyes were popping out from their sockets!"

"Standing on his shoulders? You guys were assaulted by the workers? Okay! We're going in now!"

"Not the workers, it's real ghost; there are no worker inside this Haunted House..." Before Zhu Jianing could finish, footsteps came from the toilet entrance. "Has the ghost entered?"

"What are you talking about? Hello?" The middle-aged man's voice came from the phone. Afraid that it might catch the ghost's attention, Zhu Jianing quickly ended the call.

*Hopefully, it doesn't hear me. Please don't let it discover me, and I won't ever visit this place again.* Zhu Jianing turned off the phone, bent down, and stared straight at the wooden door of the cubicle.

He did not know when the door before him would be pulled open, and he did not know what might be beyond the door. Various scary images filled his mind like the scary woman's face appearing behind the door or a school uniform fluttering on its own into his cubicle.

*What should I do? Brother Yuan, please come soon!* he prayed to himself. The sound of footsteps came closer and closer!

CREAK...

The door to the first cubicle was pushed open. The old wooden door creaked audibly, and it caused Zhu Jianing to hold his breath in fear. After a small pause, the second cubicle door was pushed open.

*It's getting closer!* After another long pause, as he expected, the third door was pushed open.

*It's right next to me! It'll open this door soon!* The muscles all over Zhu Jianing's body tensed. Fear and terror were tormenting his sanity. Time trickled by, but weirdly enough, no one opened the door to his cubicle. He waited for half a minute, and the door to his cubicle was still unmoved.

*It left?* He gathered all his courage to pull open the door a sliver. There was nothing outside. *It really left?*

He pushed the door slowly open, and there was really no one outside. *That was lucky. I was almost discovered.*

After sighing in relief, Zhu Jianing called the middle-aged man's number again. As the light shone on his phone, he saw something reflected on the phone display. He looked behind him, and on top of the door of the third cubicle, a disjointed face was silently looking at him.

### **Chapter 100: What Happened to Fei Youliang?**

The phone slid through his fingers and landed on the floor. A voice could still be heard on the other end.

"Youliang's phone is not reachable. What happened to you guys in there?"

"Xiao Zhu? Can you hear me?"

"Zhu Jianing? Are you alright? Talk to me?"

Of course, Zhu Jianing could hear him, but at that moment, he had lost the power of speech. His pupils rolled back, and Zhu Jianing slithered to the floor like wet laundry.

"Didn't I warn you not to take pictures and videos inside the Haunted House? Why didn't you listen?" Chen Ge removed his mask and placed it inside his pocket. He glanced at Zhu Jianing, who was convulsing on the floor, and he had a renewed appreciation for the disclaimer agreement.

His scare tactics were different from other Haunted Houses. Normal Haunted Houses had actors pretend to be ghosts who hid in the blind corner to scare the visitors with sudden screams and shouts. Chen Ge's tactic was different. His focus was on the creation of the atmosphere, and he allowed the visitors to walk into the scare on their own. The whole process was fool-proof and could not be detected earlier.

Even when the visitors were already prepared, they would still be scared— Zhu Jianing was the perfect example. The fear inside his heart which had no place to release was like an ice cube lodged in his throat, stopping his breath and chilling his bones.



Chen Ge exited the third cubicle, picked up the phone, and slid it inside Zhu Jianing's pocket before dragging the man out of the toilet and depositing him in the corridor.

*Why haven't the spasms stopped? But he's still breathing, so he should be fine.* Chen Ge applied pressure to the man's temples, and when Zhu Jianing's pupils regained focus, he said, "Can you hear me? Where is your friend who came in with you?"

There was no answer, so Chen Ge had to give up on the man. "Stay put, or else you might run into an actual ghost."

He was afraid that he might scare the other person dumb as well, so Chen Ge removed his bloodied outfit and carried it in his arm.

*This man came running out from the female dormitory, so his friend should be there.*

Chen Ge ran toward the dormitory, but even after he searched through all the bedrooms, he could not find Fei Youliang.

*Where did he go?* He stopped at the room with the Pen Spirit. The pen that he had fixed with tape was broken once more and was lying on the floor.

*There is no sign of fighting in the room, so where could the bespectacled man have gone?* Chen Ge exited the female dormitory and reached the junction. *Could he have gone down the other way?*

The other route led to the deep well and school office. The road was uneven, and after passing several offices, Chen Ge finally found Fei Youliang. The man's condition was even worse than Zhu Jianing's. There was white foam around his lips, and his glasses were shattered. However, the most curious thing was that he was lying near the well at the end of the corridor with one of his hands holding the edge of the well like he was going to haul himself into it.

*What in the world happened to this guy? Looks like he has angered more than just the Pen Spirit!* There was no surveillance in this new scenario, so Chen Ge had no idea what had happened to Fei Youliang.

Looking at the man's worse for wear condition, Chen Ge very kindly checked his pulse.

*The man's condition is very similar to He San's when he first visited the Haunted House. I'd better get him out of here first.*

After wasting plenty of energy, Chen Ge finally managed to drag the two to the scenario entrance. Prying open the wooden boards, he just finished dragging the two onto the first floor when he heard the sound of an argument coming from outside the Haunted House; it sounded like the people from Qin Guang's studio were attempting to barge into the Haunted House.

*So much trouble today.* With one arm under each visitor, he dragged the two out of the Haunted House. Chen Ge dropped Fei Youliang and Zhu Jianing before the people from Qin Guang's studio. His eyes scanned the lot of them as he demanded, "What is the commotion about?"

Two lively, vibrant men had walked into the Haunted House, and two lifeless husks had come out. One of them was even foaming at the mouth. Did he get scared until he vomited?

The surrounding crowd immediately took a step back to clear a space for them.

“Xiao Zhu! Youliang!” The people from Qin Guang’s studio immediately rushed over to help them off the ground. Zhu Jianing was recovering; he now responded to others at least, but his legs were still weak.

The serious case was Fei Youliang. He was not unconscious, because his eyes were wide open, but he did not respond to people calling his name. His expression was blank, and the white foam continued to trail out of the corner of his lips.

“What have you done to the both of them?” the middle-aged man demanded angrily.

“Why would you ask me? How would I know?” Chen Ge was being honest. When he entered the scenario, the two were already in such a state.

“We talked to each other earlier. Xiao Zhu said that your employees stepped on Youliang’s shoulders! How dare you allow your workers to assault the visitors? We are definitely going to sue!”

“Who saw my employees assault him?” Chen Ge glanced at the two lying on the floor. “Feel free to call the police. I can guarantee, other than their own hands, you won’t be able to find foreign fingerprints on the rest of their bodies.”

“Stop arguing, I’ll call the park’s doctor. The most important thing now is to help them.” This was such a headache for Uncle Xu.

“They’re in this state, and you still refuse to admit your fault? Thankfully, we came prepared!” The middle-aged man opened Fei Youliang’s backpack and pulled out the laptop from within. Then he connected the wireless camera from Fei Youliang’s chest and the audio recorder attached to the backpack to the laptop.

“Indeed, you people sure came prepared.” When Chen Ge was dragging the ‘bodies’ out of the Haunted House earlier, he had already noticed the cameras and could guess the real motive behind why they were there. However, he did not mind it one bit. Other Haunted Houses banned recording was because they were afraid that their set designs would be leaked; after all, designing a set was incredibly pricey. However, that was not a concern for Chen Ge. He would be given new scenarios after completing Trial Missions. In terms of the updating speed for new scenarios, no Haunted House could rival Chen Ge.

From his perspective, the videos collected by these guys were a type of alternative advertisement; after all, what his Haunted House was missing most was exposure.

“You won’t be so smug in a bit. I will keep the video of your employees physically assaulting the visitors as evidence!” the middle-aged man said loudly like he was trying to get the attention of the passing crowd.

“We are absolute professionals; we didn’t not lay a finger on your people. How many times do you want me to repeat that?” Chen Ge asked as he wandered over to the laptop. He, too, was actually curious about what happened to Fei Youliang inside the Haunted House and why he ended up next to the well.

The middle-aged man straightened the laptop and played the recorded video. The screen was dark, and only random noises could be heard. At the time, Fei Youliang had not entered the Haunted House. The recorder had probably been activated beforehand. The camera had not been taken out yet, so they could only hear noises but could see no image.

Several seconds later, Chen Ge's voice could be heard from the computer.

"Let me remind you, the last person who made a claim like yours came out on his back."

Then Fei Youliang's condescending laugh followed. "You've only managed to arouse my interest even more."