

Iyashikei 101

Chapter 101:

Han Fei's heart overwhelmed with emotions, he had not felt something even remotely akin to this in such a long time and the last place he'd expect to experience this emotion was in a world filled with monsters and ghosts. "Since you've treated me as family, then I will also try my best to fulfil your wish, to wipe away your pain and to present you all with true salvation." Other than Wei Youfu, the other victims still could not communicate with Han Fei. The hatred and resentment in their hearts were too strong and their residual humanity was squeezed to the corner of their souls.

All the 7 victims were still getting used to their sudden increase in power, only the 8th victim looked at Han Fei with open curiosity.

"What is your name? Or how do they normally refer to you?" Han Fei tried to communicate with the girl but she was extremely shy. Once Han Fei tried to approach her, she immediately jumped to hide behind Wei Youfu like a scary bunny. "Am I that scary?" Han Fei chuckled self-deprecatingly. He straightened himself and checked the girl's introduction in his life blueprint.

"??? (Lingering Spirit): She is the 8th victim, she is the chosen one, she is the key." The 8th victim had no name, the system marked her out with 3 question marks. The other thing worth noting was this was the first time the system had delineated someone as a Lingering Spirit. Based on Han Fei's current information, the ghosts in this world appeared to be separated into different categories based on the strength of the resentment inside them. Lingering Spirit should be stronger than Animated Regret like the wandering souls in the previous manager's memory.

"The system says that this child is a key? What kind of lock will she open? She is a tenant at this building and the building manager had a map inside his room where a spot is marked out with the word, exit. Could this girl be the key to that exit?" Han Fei had no basis for his speculation. "The 8th victim was personally chosen by the Butterfly but the child somehow ended up inside this apartment. What was the connection between the Butterfly and the previous building manager? The manager said that he wanted to destroy this world and that most likely went against the goal of this Butterfly who was using this world to cultivate something erroneous..." Even though the previous manager was dead now, it was undeniable that he must once be quite powerful. "I have inherited the old man's stuff. I need to level up as soon as possible and expand my exploration beyond this building."

Leaving his roommates to adapt to their new power, Han Fei exited the innermost bedroom and settled at the living room. With a glance at the clock, he realized it was almost 4 am. He opened the menu and

was about to exit when he remembered something. Just for kicks, he opened the chatroom function and right at 4 am, Chatroom 444 lit up.

He entered the Chatroom immediately and sent out an anonymous message, 'Is anyone there?'

Huang Yin (Tester Account Player 0999): '@ This unusual timing again. My friend, is that you?'

Anonymous Player: 'Brother Huang, this is such a coincidence! Yes, we've met around the same time before.'

Huang Yin (Tester Account Player 0999): 'Ha ha ha ha, I knew it was you. Why did you suddenly log off that time?'

Han Fei didn't know how to answer so he changed the subject, one that he knew would deeply interest Huang Yin.

Anonymous Player: 'Brother Huang, I encountered a Hidden Mission recently, it might be related to the cryptic world!'

Huang Yin (Tester Account Player 0999): 'Shush! You shan't type that out in the chatroom! Just keep it to yourself!'

Anonymous Player: 'There's no one else here anyway. By the way, Brother Huang, what is your in-game talent? Can it be updated or edited in the game?'

Huang Yin (Tester Account Player 0999): 'My talent is Level D, Experienced Patient Makes a Doctor, which is honestly quite like my situation in real life. My physique was weak since I was young and I was often sick, it was why I picked up medicine in the first place, to save up on those medical bills. Ha ha ha ha. A fortune-teller once told me it was because I have too much Yin energy in my life chakra. Can you believe it? But enough about me, what about you? What's your talent?'

Anonymous Player: 'My talent is something called Resurrection. I have no idea what it does, therefore I wonder if a player's talent can be changed in game.'

Huang Yin (Tester Account Player 0999): 'Talents are only given to a small handful of players during character creation. To possess a talent, even the lowest level one, is already very lucky. Therefore, I believe it's probably very hard to change one in game.'

Even though Huang Yin's proclamation of the fact that he had too much Yin energy in his life would make him the perfect candidate for Han Fei to try out his Spirit Farer talent, Han Fei did not do so. He did not want to drag the innocent man into the dangerous cryptic world. It was already hard enough for him to survive alone, there was no need to pull Huang Yin down with him, unless he had found a way to safely send the man back to the surface world.

However, Han Fei did have other candidates that he wished to bring over to Perfect Life's cryptic world. For now, Han Fei could not intervene with the things at the surface world but there was no reason why he could not find a medium, for example, someone like Huang Yin. 'A player character might not be created with spiritual affinity but after they have been exposed to many supernatural events, will Yin energy collect around them? Will I be able to use my Spirit Farer talent on them then?'

'Currently the game is only in its 6th CB, and there are a limited number of players. The people I have in mind are still not in the game. But after the game goes into OB, my opportunity should spread wide open. The Chatroom 444 will get a lot more crowded than now.'

Han Fei's goal was big. Just like what the previous manager said, Han Fei had chosen the most difficult path. To continue safely on this path, Han Fei had to master both the surface and cryptic worlds.

Huang Yin was a kind person but most importantly, Han Fei felt a bond with him. Among 999 chat rooms, the two somehow managed to meet, if that was not a bond, what was?

Huang Yin (Tester Account Player 0999): 'Brother, are you still there? Would you like to come over? I just finished decorating! I purchased so much new furniture!'

Anonymous Player: 'It's getting a bit late. I should get offline and go to bed. But I'll be sure to visit next time!'

Huang Yin (Tester Account Player 0999): 'Okay, good night. 😊 Bye bye.'

Chatroom 444 was only available to Han Fei within the 2 minutes as night turned to dawn. To avoid the sudden disappearance like last time, Han Fei voluntarily bade farewell to Huang Yin before the time limit was up.

'This big brother is really absorbed in the game. It will be so cruel to yank back the fairytale coating to show him the horror that is hidden underneath. Sigh, I hope he'll be able to stomach that truth when the revelation comes...'

Exiting the chatroom, Han Fei did as he promised and left the game. Blood covered everything. He removed the gaming helmet.

'This night should be a turning point in my gaming life. The apartment building is like the first stage meant for new players, but now it's about time I venture forth to explore the outer world.'

Chapter 102:

The cryptic world was large and dangerous. Han Fei had no idea what awaited him outside the apartment, he was both anxious and curious. Putting away the gaming helmet, Han Fei soon fell asleep. He had never been so exhausted in his life. Han Fei was woken up by his phone at 7 am. He picked up and answered blurrily, "Who is this?"

"Han Fei, I understand that there is an ongoing misunderstanding between you and the company. But no worries because we have decided to pay you compensation for giving you the sudden leave notice. Do you mind if we meet up to discuss this further in person? From what I know, you have not joined a new agency, right?"

Hearing the voice, Han Fei frowned. Then he checked the caller Id, it was the manager from his previous agency. 'I thought I had already blocked his number...'

"Han Fei, this is a rare chance. You should definitely not let it slip. Do you know how much I have to fight for this second chance on your behalf? If not for our close bond..." Han Fei hung up immediately. He deleted the number and blocked it. Social decency was no longer as important to Han Fei as before. After starting Perfect Life, he had learned not to spend any more time on these unnecessary people and events.

'But why would my former agency suddenly reach out to me? Has something happened recently?' Han Fei logged into the browser on his phone and out came his name on the front page.

"The hero in the human jigsaw case will be starring in a movie inspired by the real-life tragedy!"

"The most authentic main character in history! I have killed myself, I have captured myself and now I will play myself!"

"Everything will be reconstructed down to the smallest detail! The movie promises to bring you into the deepest abyss, to admire the flower of sin that can only bloom on human hearts."

Han Fei had no idea what happened. He went to sleep and woke up to find many articles on him peppering the internet. The news was still spreading. He was the hot topic of the day. His follower numbers on his social media account broke through the 30000 gap. However, the comment section was more like a law-education forum, where many official law enforcement online representations were busy fielding the citizens' questions. It was not that unusual for celebrities to have some strange fans but it appeared like every single one of Han Fei's fans was a crime buff. Along with the law enforcement, they were discussing what kind of case would make a good detective movie for Han Fei to star in next.

'What in the world is happening?' Han Fei immediately gave Director Jiang a call. It rang only once before it was picked up.

"Han Fei? What's wrong?"

"I saw so many articles about me on the internet, are those paid promotions done by the crew?"

"You gave me such a fright there, I thought you're going to tell me you won't be attending the shoot today because you have something else to do." Director Jiang sighed in relief. "The online reporting has nothing to do with us. What you did was simply too eye-grabbing. The news outlets picked up on it and you know the rest. Your popularity has reached a new height but as time passes, it'll slowly fade away so we need to push out the movie before that happens!"

“Understood, I’ll head to the set immediately.” After hanging up, Han Fei rubbed his temples. “After I earn enough money, I really need to get a gaming hub. The helmet is quite uncomfortable especially when you need to wear it through the night.” After a simple morning routine, Han Fei left his home. When he crossed the front door, Han Fei tossed a casual look at a corner and then left in a hurry.

About 10 seconds later, a bespectacled middle-aged man exited from the back of a van. He had a very professional set of camera equipment with him. “The man saw me? That’s impossible. I’ve been in this business for more than a decade already and I have never missed out on a scoop...” The middle-aged man huffed and carefully followed after Han Fei. But after he turned a corner, he was shocked to realize that Han Fei had disappeared. “Huh? Where did he go?”

“Looking for me?” Han Fei’s voice rang beside the man’s ear. Before the latter turned around, Han Fei gripped his wrists and pressed him against the wall. “Why are you following me?” The professional dressing-down confused the middle-aged man. His brain shut down for a moment before he came up with an excuse. But when he met Han Fei’s gaze, he found the lie stuck in his throat. “Please don’t hurt me! I’m just a reporter from Xin Lu Starlight News. My name is Jin Jun. I feel like there’s a big scoop on you so I’ve been following you.”

“So you’re a paparazzi?”

“No, as I’ve told you, I’m a professional reporter.”

After releasing the hold on the middle-aged man, Han Fei said sternly, “I’d advise you to schedule an official interview with me at an appropriate venue. You have to realize that there are murderers still out there trying to take revenge on me. If you keep on tailing me, I’m afraid you’ll accidentally run into them.” With the warning given, Han Fei ignored the man, and continued his way to the set.

When he arrived, he noticed the place was even more crowded than usual. Other than reporters, there were also people from the new media. In this age where everyone could become an internet sensation, the truth was often sidelined for clicks and money. Some of these new media ‘journalists’ fed into and propagated this phenomenon. They often exaggerated a small issue, and employed clickbait titles. One should not even put it past them to come up with fake news. The possible effects their ‘news’ could have on the subject? They couldn’t care less as long as they got the clicks and views.

To catch up with the shooting progress, Han Fei did not stay to interact with the reporters. Unable to get anything from Han Fei, those with journalism ethics chose to wait for Han Fei to take breaks, they’d ask

him for a few statements then. The others however started to come up with stories in their mind already.

A few scenes were done that morning. Han Fei did not get a break until noon. But before he could get a bite in him, Zhan Yueyue ran over. "Brother, have you seen the latest news? You're the one who helped the police solve the frozen body and toy plushie cases as well?"

Zhan Yueyue was technically not wrong but that fact should not be known to the public. With a frown, Han Fei took out his phone and went online. Turns out some of the 'news' sites had decided to credit Han Fei with all the recently solved cases. The articles were badly researched but who really cared about truth these days?

They had no proof, they merely wrote these articles because they knew it would be sensational. But the problem was, Han Fei would have to face the dangerous consequences of their actions!

"Teacher Han, they're not real, right?" Zhan Yueyue's jaw dropped to the ground. "You've been shooting the movie with us every day, where did you find the time to help the police solve 2 more cases? Are you real life Conan?!"

"Shush, let me think about this."

"Teacher Han, this is a good thing. They're helping you garner popularity!"

"Yes, but they're doing that by painting a big red target on my back. The murderers of these cases are still out there, and now they might come after me, thinking I'm the one who reported them."

Hearing that, Zhan Yueyue's face paled with concern. "The fuck! Doesn't that mean we're in deep danger?!"

"Don't panic. I say, let them come. There's no telling which party will end up as the victim in the end." Han Fei chuckled to himself. For some reason, Zhan Yueyue felt a chill run down his spine.

Chapter 103:

Ever since Han Fei showed him the ropes, Zhan Yueyue looked up to Han Fei. While he played the main character, Han Fei could easily bring into life the positivity of hope in face of death and despair. He radiated tenacity and belief in every scene despite all the reasons not to. However, in Zhan Yueyue's personal opinion, Han Fei made a more charming antagonist than protagonist. There was a mysterious allure about the man that inspired awe and fear, there was grace in his character's madness. Zhan Yueyue played a minor antagonist in the movie as well but the young man knew how big the difference between himself and Han Fei was. Zhan Yueyue did try to improve his acting but for some reason, he was unable to bring himself to Han Fei's level. It had been boggling him the reason why but at that moment, something cleared for him.

Han Fei's acting talent originated from within. Zhan Yueyue did not know how to really describe it. In a few scenes, Zhan Yueyue could easily believe that Han Fei was not really acting... Or rather the Han Fei before the camera was the real Han Fei.

"But this is still a serious issue. I need you to inform Director Jiang about this so that everyone will be more cautious." The Butterfly was still out there and the madman might come after the crew so Han Fei's warning was not unfounded.

After the lunch break, Han Fei returned to the set. His working speed could only be described as horrifying. None of the crew had encountered an actor like Han Fei before. He only needed a few minutes to memorize all the lines. During the shoot, he wasted no time to get into character. Many scenes were wrapped up with one uninterrupted shot. His every single action was meaningful. Not one frame was wasted. Soon the indoor scenes were done. Then, the crew waited around for night to fall to start the night scenes. Han Fei assumed the character the minute he was called into the scene. The shoot wrapped up at 10 pm, a lot earlier than expected. After bidding farewell to the crew, Han Fei removed his make-up and headed home.

Along the way, Han Fei did not pay much attention but when he was almost home, Han Fei noticed he was being followed again. 'I believe it's that paparazzi again, he takes his job seriously, I'll give him that.' Han Fei crossed through a garden path and when the timing was right, he scurried into hiding.

Soon, the paparazzi named Jin Jun appeared at the garden entrance. After he noticed he had lost Han Fei again, he grumbled, "Is he an actor or a police officer? Why is he so good at counter-surveillance?" Jin Jun complained for a few more minutes before he packed up to call it a day. Han Fei decided to then come out from his hiding spot to give this middle-aged man another warning. Then to Han Fei's surprise,

not long after Jin Jun left, a man wearing a grey coat, mask and low-brimmed hat slithered out from the shadow.

'Who is this man following Jin Jun?' The man had half of his face hidden away, only his eyes were exposed. Han Fei watched everything from the dark. He zoomed in on the pair of eyes. 'The man's eyes are bloodshot, he's under a great load of pressure.' Han Fei raked through his mind and suddenly something aligned. The man's face shape matched the escaped killer from the toy plushie case! The family of three dismembered Ying Yue. The mother and daughter had been detained but the father was still out there.

'Perchance he has read one of those articles and thought I'm the anonymous tipper, so he wanted to take revenge on me? But why is he tailing Jin Jun instead? Does he think Jin Jun will bring him to me?' The man in the grey coat followed Jin Jun. Instead of calling the police, Han Fei silently shadowed the man. The game of cat and mouse resumed but who could tell who was the cat and who was the mouse.

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"Yet another day wasted but I know there is a big scoop on that actor! The person who knows the crime the best is the killer himself, perhaps the actor participated in the case more than he revealed to the police. I've followed many celebrities before and none of them gave me the creeps like he did. He is very dangerous." Putting away his tools, Jin Jun returned to his house, which was a rather high-end neighbourhood in the old city. After he entered the elevator, Jin Jun took out his phone to scroll through the news. "Eventually, I'll have my scoop and it'll be huge... Just wait and see..."

An arm suddenly shot in to stop the closing elevator doors. A man in a grey coat entered the elevator booth. Jin Jun glanced at the man and then turned back to his phone. Both of them arrived at the 6th floor. Jin Jun left the elevator while his eyes were still on his phone. After a few seconds, the man in grey coat exited the elevator as well. Malice chilled the eyes hidden under the cap brim. The man stealthily sidled up to Jin Jun. Jin Jun held his camera equipment in one hand while his other reached for the door. Just as he was about to walk in, a cold steel pressed against his neck.

"My friend, I need a favor." A hoarse voice said. Jin Jun's body froze. "Please don't hurt me! I'll give you all the money I have!"

"Shush." The man in grey warned urgently. The knife grazed Jin Jun's skin. "I'm a wanted man, why do you think I need your money?"

“Then, then what do you need? I will give you anything you want.”

“Get into the room first.” The man and his hostage entered the room. After the front door closed, the man in grey sighed in relief. His forehead was soaked. “You’re the one who wrote the article on the toy plushie case this afternoon, aren’t you? You said you got an exclusive from the actor where he admitted he was the one who has been helping the police solve all these recent cases.”

Hearing that, Jin Jun’s heart twisted with regret. “Brother, that was merely a blog post, a mere speculation! I am just a common reporter, this is a huge misunderstanding!”

“A common reporter?” The man took in the luxurious décor, the many intelligent furniture, the latest Perfect Life gaming hub and his gaze darkened. “Oh, then I’m sure you won’t miss this common life!” The knife pressed down further and the blood squirted. The man’s face colored with satisfaction hearing Jin Jun’s yelps of pain. “Someone has given an anonymous tip to the police regarding the toy plushie case and that person is Han Fei, isn’t it?”

“I really don’t know!”

“Stop lying to me! It’s only a matter of time until I’m captured. But before that, I’ll make sure that man pays for what he did to me. Believe me when I say I won’t mind taking a few more lives in the process!” The man kept pressing on the knife and the blood flowed. “Tell me everything you know and I might let you go.” The blood excited the man in grey. He got his kicks from tormenting Jin Jun.

However, Jin Jun was not a dummy either. He knew the man would not let him survive to tell this tale. So the only solution he had was to drag this out as long as possible and pray for a miracle. “The article was faked! The real tipper is not Han Fei, but I can bring you to the real tipper!” Jin Jun uttered as the blade pressed deeper into his flesh. If he could leave this house, he’d have the chance to cry for help.

“There’s another tipper? Do you really think I’ll fall for that? Looks like some lessons are in order before you decide to be honest with me!” The man in the grey readied the knife and aimed to plunge it into Jin Jun’s body. But at that moment, a knocking came from the door.

“Hello? Is anyone home? I need you to sign this delivery!” The sudden interruption caused the man in grey to stop.

“If you dare to make any sound, I’ll stab you to death immediately.” The man in grey hoped that by keeping silence, the delivery man would eventually leave but the latter was incredibly stubborn. The knocking became louder and louder. The man in grey needed Jin Jun to be alive to get the real identity of the tipper so he couldn’t murder Jin Jun just yet but if he allowed the deliveryman to keep knocking, it would eventually attract the attention of Jin Jun’s neighbours.

“Motherfucker, why are there so many people who are in it for me today?!” He cursed under his breath before he turned around to shout, “Just leave the stuff at the door, I’ll go take it later myself.”

Jin Jun wished to shout for help but the knife was on his neck. If he made any noise, the man would definitely slash his throat. Jin Jun’s eyes were red from tears. He prayed vehemently that the delivery man would not heed the crazy man’s order.

“Brother, your stuff is not paid yet. How am I supposed to leave them here? Please don’t waste my time! I still have other deliveries to make!” The delivery man groused. “It’s only 50 RMB! Don’t tell me you can’t afford that! Just open the door and give me the money. I’ll leave immediately after that. Do you really think I want to stay here?!”

The man in grey hesitated before he eventually pulled out a 100 RMB bill from his pocket. With the bill in his hand, the man glared viciously at Jin Jun, “I don’t want to kill you so don’t give me reason to.”

Jin Jun nodded cautiously. Then the man in grey slowly reached out to pull the front door open. But before he could slip the money out through the gap, the door was shoved open by an outside force!

The delivery man was a young man with a handsome look, and penetrating gaze. Before Jin Jun and the man in grey could react to this sudden change, the young man already lunged into the room. The sight of blood and a knife did not faze the young man. He landed a straight punch right on the bridge of the man’s nose!

The sound of bone cracking echoed inside the room. Blood oozed out from the man’s nose. His brain buzzed and then he careened backwards. ‘Huh, so this is the effect of 10 stamina points?’

The young man picked up the knife. Then he glanced at the stunned Jin Jun before extending him a helping hand. “Haven’t I told you to stop following me earlier?”

Chapter 104:

The lights from the corridor shone on Han Fei's silhouette, casting him in an angel-like glow.

"Han Fei!" Jin Jun fell to the ground. His hands covered his neck and the way he looked at Han Fei was how a worshipper would view their God. He was at the edge of despair, Jin Jun definitely did not expect Han Fei to come to his rescue. The joy and relief he felt could not be described in words!

"Do you have a first aid kit around? You need to bandage that wound around your neck before it gets serious." Han Fei's main goal was the man in grey, saving Jin Jun was a matter of convenience. Studying the man lying on the ground, Han Fei shut the door close behind him. "You're Ming Mei's father, aren't you?" Han Fei removed the man's mask. Han Fei's punch was quite heavy. The man's face was covered in blood but from the general feature, Han Fei confirmed that this man was the wanted criminal. The man in grey refused to answer but that mattered not to Han Fei, "Didn't you want to take revenge on me?"

Grabbing the man by his head, Han Fei slammed it heavily against the ground. As the man's head lolled weakly to the side, Han Fei squatted down beside him, "You are Ming Mei's father and I'm Ying Yue's brother. Your family has murdered my little sister and you're the one who needs to take revenge on me? Laughable." Through Ying Yue, Han Fei knew the sort of despicable things this family of three had done to Ying Yue, things that would have been a silent secret following Ying Yue's death. "You'll have to answer for what you've done to Ying Yue." Han Fei was considering how to help Ying Yue exact her revenge when he saw the Perfect Life's latest gaming hub in the living room. "Jin Jun, I need a favor from you."

"Of course, anything for you!" Jin Jun, who was bandaging his neck, immediately hopped over like a bunny once he heard Han Fei call him.

"You're a Perfect Life's player as well? Isn't that the latest gaming hub released by their company?"

"I've started playing since the 4th CB! In fact, I'll let you in on an industry secret. I've wrangled up some Beta Tester Accounts on the black market. They sell like hot cakes. If you want, I can give them all to you!" Jin Jun's eyes practically glowed with admiration as he looked at Han Fei.

“There’s no need for that, I only need a small favor. But I’m still not sure whether I can trust you or not.” Han Fei’s eyes wandered over to the fainted man. He knew this was a very rare chance, he mustn’t let it slip.

“You’ve just saved my life, I will remember that forever! Even though you might have doubts due to my career choice, I, Jin Jun, is a man of my words. If you need me at all in the future, I will do everything I can to help!” Jin Jun had a renewed appreciation of life after such a close brush with death. If not for Han Fei, he’d be dead already.

“Okay, I only need you to do one thing for me.” Han Fei eased the gaming hub open and dropped the man in grey into it. “Help him set up a new tester account and get him into the game.”

“Huh? Why?” Jin Jun was confused, “A tester account is worth about several hundred thousand RMB now, are you sure you want to waste it on him?”

“Just do what I say. Even after I leave, ensure that he stays in the game.” Han Fei glanced at the clock. “You can call the police to come get him after 12:15 am.”

“Okay, but I’m afraid he’ll come after me when you’re gone.” Jin Jun said worriedly.

“Well, I have the solution.” Han Fei snapped the man’s wrists. “Now he’s as harmless as a puppy.” Han Fei would never show mercy for these scums. “Remember what I said. You have to ensure that he’s in the game until after midnight.” After giving all the details, Han Fei exchanged contact numbers with Jin Jun before he left in a hurry.

“With Ming Mei’s father’s account number, in game Id, date of birth, his appearance and other details, I should be able to summon him to join me in game tonight!” Han Fei had great anticipation of the new manager talent. However, he had no reason to use it until now. He was afraid of accidentally harming innocent people. Han Fei reached home when it was around 11:30 pm. He had a casual supper and connected all the wires. Before he logged into the game, he gave Jin Jun a call.

After ensuring that Ming Yue’s father was already in the game, Han Fei put on the gaming helmet. Blood curtained his world!

“Welcome to Perfect Life where you are free to choose your own perfect life!” Han Fei’s eyes opened and he was inside Room 1044. With no time to waste, he opened the menu and chose to use the Spirit Farer talent. After he clicked on it, something unexpected happened. The moment the talent was triggered, the menu started to fracture and bleed. Horrifying death masks surfaced from the background and each of them had a name clamped between their teeth!

There was no system notification or explanation. A bloody statement bubbled up in his mind. “You are looking at him!” Han Fei’s scalp numbed. The simple directive appeared to suggest something incredibly sinister. Han Fei took a breath and straightened himself. He started to look for Ming Mei’s father’s name. Soon, he made a discovery. The names carried by the masks had varying depth of color. The deeper the redness, the greater the chance of the soul being summoned.

‘This will take forever!’ Han Fei zoomed in on a face that had no name. He tried to write down Ming Mei’s father’s name on it directly. When the name was completed, the bloody statement echoed again. “You have 80 percent of failure, 10 percent of success, and 10 percent of summoning something else! Are you going to proceed with the spirit-faring?”

Han Fei had been waiting for that moment, “Yes!”

The face came alive and gnawed on the name. Yin energy exploded inside Room 1044, the doors and windows creaked noisily. All the death masks surged towards Han Fei but the latter kept his eyes locked on that one mask which was crucial to him.

He had no idea what would happen next. In that moment, an indescribable fear rose within him. It felt as if the death masks were going to consume him and drag him to join their ranks!

The menu shattered completely and the faces melted into a pool of blood. But the one with Ming Mei’s father’s name gradually took on the man’s shape inside the pool. It floated up closer and closer to Han Fei. Han Fei reached his hands into the pool to intercept him. Han Fei’s hands tightened around Ming Mei’s father. He then tried to pull the man out from the pool, but the moment the face broke through the surface, the man’s mouth opened and emitted a shrill cry. The face and the rest of its body crumbled. Han Fei’s hands were left holding nothing. He thought he had failed. However, when Han Fei pulled his arms back, a ghost face that was half dissolved leaped out from the bloody water.

The name inside its mouth was intensely red. As Han Fei retracted his arms, the thing latched onto his skin and emerged from the pool as well!

Crimson flashed before Han Fei's eyes. Two panels swoop in slowly from the sides to join each other to reform the menu, it was like the gates of hell closing. When the menu returned to normal, the robotic voice said, "You've successfully summoned a wandering soul!"

Chapter 105:

The whole room was swept up in Yin energy, all the light was engulfed by it. Han Fei stood alone inside the living room as he listened to the system notifications.

"You've successfully summoned a wandering soul!"

"Notification for Player 0000! The success rate of your Spirit Farer skill is very low and there is a chance of you summoning something else. Since there is no actual summoning ritual, the location of the summoned soul cannot be identified. They will land at a random location within 100 metres radius of where you stand!"

"Notification for Player 0000! Some wandering souls are extremely dangerous, please be cautious!"

The skill was a success but Han Fei had a feeling the soul he summoned did not belong to Ming Mei's father. Ming Mei's father's name was very pale, it shattered when it broke through the surface of the blood pool. Instead, another ghost face took its place and answered Han Fei's call. However, to be perfectly honest, Han Fei had no idea what kind of thing he had summoned this time. 'According to the system, the skill can not only summon other players, but also some other unknown things, things are extremely deadly.'

Han Fei remembered distinctively the fear that overwhelmed him when he utilized the skill. There were many abominable existences hidden among the ghost faces. 'Since the summoned creature will land within a 100 metres of where I am, that can only mean that it is still inside this apartment.' Han Fei wanted to punish the wicked but not to harm the innocent. Therefore, he needed to locate this wandering soul as soon as possible. 'I noticed the thing that came carried a name that was extremely red in color. It has to be someone or something with great spiritual affinity.'

The inside of the apartment was relatively safe now so Han Fei did not need to stay inside Room 1044 for 3 hours anymore. He grabbed the landlord's keys and rushed out. He mobilized the neighbours that

he was friends with to locate that wandering soul. Han Fei started from the first floor. He searched every single room, making use of the opportunity to check out the rooms that he had not visited yet. He ran through the floors one after another. Even after he reached the 8th floor, Han Fei still did not encounter any trace of the wandering soul. Just as he assumed that the soul had been consumed by one of his neighbours, a shriek came from outside the apartment!

Han Fei hurried to the window to look out. He managed to triangulate the origin of the scream, it came from Happiness Neighbourhood Apartment 2!

“Wait, how come that scream sounds so familiar...”

...

“Where am I? I was redoing the paint of the bathroom... and I was walking out from the bathroom door. So... Where am I now? Where is the rest of my home?” A light moldy smell lingered in the moist air. Huang Yin was stunned for a whole 10 seconds before it dawned on him. “Am I inside a hidden map? My own bathroom door connects to a hidden map? What the fuck?!” A hidden map was even rarer than a hidden mission. According to the official news, players could obtain very unique items while exploring hidden maps. Only those extremely lucky would have the chance to wander their way into the hidden maps. “But my Luck is only 1! Never mind, I shouldn’t question this too much! There’s no reason to look a gift horse in the mouth.”

Huang Yin was delighted. He was about to begin his exploration when a knock came from the front door. “Hmm? What could this be? Since I’m on a hidden map, can this be a hidden mission? Lady Luck is really smiling on me today!” He jogged excitedly to the door. The house came with extra security, there was the inner wooden door and the outer anti-theft grille. Without giving it much thought, Huang Yin peeled the wooden door open and looked out. In the corridor that reeked, a middle-aged woman covered in bruises and blood was leaning against the steel anti-theft door.

Bang! Huang Yin’s hands moved faster than his brain. He subconsciously slammed the door close. ‘What was that?’ His brain was still processing what he saw. Huang Yin’s brain frazzled from confusion. ‘Did I do something wrong?’ Taking a deep breath, Huang Yin leaned on the wooden door and looked through the peephole, there was no one outside. ‘Was that a bug?’

He pulled the door open for a gap. Huang Yin confirmed that there was definitely no one outside. The woman that he saw earlier disappeared like she was never there to begin with. In fact, even the stench in the corridor had dissipated. ‘Was I hallucinating because I’ve been playing the game for too long?’

The corridor was unkempt, clogged with trash. The railing was rusted and many small adverts as well as children's doodles decorated the walls. This was a very normal apartment corridor.

'Every single map in Perfect Life is meticulously designed, even more so the hidden ones. However, no one really has been to a hidden map before.' Huang Yin tapped his feet loudly so the voice-activated lights in the corridor would come on. Then he walked over and went over to knock on the door opposite to his room. It was room 2041. "Is anyone home?"

There was no reply from inside the room but instead footsteps came from upstairs. Huang Yin leaned his head over to look up the stairs, there was a girl about 10 standing at the landing. Her skin was abnormally white and her frame was so slight that one would assume she was malnourished. Underneath her high collar, one could glimpse the trace of a deep purple strangulation mark.

'The NPCs inside the hidden map have such unique models...'

The girl looked at Huang Yin with surprise as if she did not expect someone would stay and converse with her.

"Did you see a middle-aged woman covered in blood earlier?" Huang Yin flashed a confident smile. He wanted to leave a good impression on the girl. The girl shook her head silently. The frail and languid mannerism of the girl evoked Huang Yin's sense of pity. He walked up the stairs to get closer to the girl. Up close, he realized that the girl looked quite pretty in spite of her pale skin and sunken cheeks.

"You shouldn't stay here all alone. Hurry on home. There seems to be a madwoman running about. I'm afraid that she might hurt you." Huang Yin was a naturally kind person, he cared for the girl even though she was just an NPC.

"I still cannot go home yet, not until I find the thing that I lost." The girl uttered shyly.

"You need to locate something that you've lost?" Years of gaming experience immediately tipped Huang Yin to the fact that he had triggered a hidden mission. He smiled brighter. "It's too dangerous for you to wander around looking for stuff so late at night. How about I help you with your search?"

The girl's face colored with even more shock when she heard Huang Yin's offer, as if she could not understand this man's mind. Her brows furrowed. The girl thought for a long time before she nodded.

His heart overflowed with joy but Huang Yin did not receive any system notification even after a long wait. Perhaps he needed to do more so he stopped to ask, "What is it that you need to find?" Helping an NPC locating their lost item was a common mission in games. Sometimes Huang Yin couldn't help but wonder how come these NPCs had such poor memories.

Huang Yin's friendliness unsettled the girl. She hesitated for a long time before she answered. "The tenants here hate me. They all think I'm being crazy but I just want to be more complete."

Then she raised the arms that she had been hiding behind her. Her slender arms truncated into bloody stumps. "Can you help me find my hands? I know someone has hidden them inside this building."

"Your hands are missing?!"

Chapter 106:

Staring numbly at the girl's still bleeding arms, Huang Yin felt the air slip out from his lungs. The girl lost not her gloves, not her handkerchief but her arms!

The blood almost splattered on Huang Yin's face as the girl waved her arms around. Since he was a doctor, he knew that only a fresh cut would cause such copious bleeding. He felt his knees buckled. This was not at all what he imagined. He thought the girl wanted him to help her find her lost pet or something, not her bloody chopped hands! He had never encountered this kind of mission before!

The surprise was so out of the left field that Huang Yin's mouth gaped open but no words came out. When he came to, he quickly scurried back into his room. 'Help a neighbour locate her missing arm? This hidden map's mission is a bit too much for me.' After forcing himself to calm down, Huang Yin ran towards the bathroom, 'I came here through the bathroom door, so I should be able to go back via the same way... hopefully'

He stood inside the bathroom and stared at the door that swung noisily from the absent draft. However, no matter how hard he stared, the miracle did not happen. "How do I leave this place?!"

The smell of blood in the room thickened. Huang Yin realized some red threads had fallen and gathered on his body. They looked suspiciously like blood capillaries. "What are these things? They seem to be falling from the ceiling..." He tried to brush them off but they stuck stubbornly to his clothes. They made him feel very uncomfortable due to the smell that they emitted. Huang Yin eventually removed his shirt and opened the shower. The chilling water caused the inner tee to stick to his skin. He felt constricted as the fabric stamped against his skin. "This game really is as real as it can get."

He stood under the shower for a half minute but to his consternation, the blood threads multiplied in numbers instead of being washed away. "No way..." He squeezed the shampoo on his head to try to clean the strange threads off. However, as the shampoo lathered up, another series of knocking came from the front door.

Bang! Bang! Bang! "They do know how to pick their timing." The knocking reverberated inside Huang Yin's heart. He closed his ears to them but the knocking only became louder and louder. His fingers clawed at his scalp with frustration and agitation. He closed his eyes to prevent the bubbles from stinging his eyes. Just as he was about to lean his head under the shower, the knocking suddenly stopped. 'Huh? The person left?!' With a head covered with bubbles, Huang Yin peeled his eyes open for a slither. But what he saw instantly froze his heart! There was a woman covered in bruises and blood standing on tiptoe inside the living room!

"What the fuck!" The bubbles slid down his forehead and stung his eyes. Huang Yin's eyes blinked from the strain. He heard rapid footsteps, it sounded like the woman was running towards him! Waving his hands madly, Huang Yin wiped away the bubbles from his face. But when he opened his eyes again, the woman had disappeared. 'How, how did she get in here?'

Huang Yin did not dare to close his eyes again. He resisted his fear and stood under the shower. Everything returned to normal in the living room. The woman felt like a part of Huang Yin's imaginations. His heart pounded heavily. Huang Yin kept his gaze on the living room. He reached his hand to close the shower but he felt something restricting his movement. When he turned and saw his palm, the man shut down. His palm was bound with shed hairs. Each of them was uniformly about 20 cm long. Clearly, they did not belong to him. 'Wait... That woman... Is she above me?'

Huang Yin's muscle locked into place!

The water carried the bubbles down his cheek. Huang Yin waited for a long time. Other than the sound of rushing water, there was nothing out of place. He summoned some courage and slowly raised his

eyes to the mirror above the sink. The mirror was very clean. It did not reflect anything supernatural but strangely enough, it did not reflect Huang Yin's image either.

'This hidden map is not for me, I am just a casual player...' Huang Yin was about to pull up the menu when something dripped on the back of his neck. A chilling feeling curled around his heart. He turned slowly around and saw a curtain of dripping hair dangling above his neck. A bruised woman was attached to the ceiling like a spider. Her skull was turned 180 degree, a feat that was impossible for a normal human.

"Fuck my life!!!!" Huang Yin shouted loudly. He tripped on the slippery bathroom tiles and crawled out from the bathroom. When he returned to the living room, things only got worse!

Bloody black hairs fell from the gaps in the ceiling. A strange cackle echoed inside the house. His brain was blank as he used his last bit of strength to run through the living room and out the door.

"Help, help!" The cackle chased after him. Huang Yin cried as loud as he could while he stumbled down the stairs. He had never moved that fast in his life!

Footsteps rang inside the stairwell, they pressed against Huang Yin's heart. He ran down 2 flights of stairs. He saw the door to Room 2021 was open. The open door was like a sign. Without thinking about it, he ran inside it to seek refuge. "I want to quit! I want to quit!" Huang Yin soon discovered something despairing when he opened the menu!

The menu said that he was currently unable to quit because he was in an abnormal state. Reading the system statement, Huang Yin's face twitched. He almost fainted. Hearing the echoes of footsteps from the corridor, Huang Yin hurried towards the bathroom. In his mind, he entered this horrible place through the bathroom door so the bathroom door was his only hope. He opened and closed the bathroom again and again. Desperation tears filled the man's eyes. "Please, please let me go back!"

Suddenly, the front door creaked open a gap and a bloodied face reached into the room. As Huang Yin shared a look with the face, his heart almost jumped out of his throat. He hurried into the bathroom. He locked the door. The man was at his limit already.

After so many surprises, Huang Yin felt his brain buzzing from a lack of oxygen. He saw the toilet and thought to sit down on it to rest. But halfway through the motion, he felt a pair of hands grab his butt. A male voice said with deep annoyance and abhorrence, "Sir, can't you see that this seat is occupied?"

An unknown voice rang out inside the supposedly empty bathroom. Huang Yin's heart skipped a beat. He apologized profusely and then blasted out from the bathroom screaming for his life.

...

Standing at the entrance of Apartment 1, Han Fei had on an embarrassed smile as he listened to the continuous screams that came out from the opposite building, "I didn't act like that when I first entered the game, did I? But this is good news, at least it proves that Brother Huang is still alive."

With Xu Qin's help, Han Fei opened the front door of Happiness Neighbourhood Apartment 1 and looked at the world covered in darkness.

Chapter 107:

This was the first time Han Fei left the apartment building since he entered the game. When the rusted front door opened, an indescribable pressure pressed against Han Fei. The ring around his finger pulsed intermittently. Han Fei could feel malicious eyes opening to his presence. "So this is the entirety of the Happiness Neighbourhood?"

The bushes in the abandoned garden rustled noisily; the playground swings creaked in the windless night, echoes of laughter seemed to come from the black and red see-saw bench; creepers climbed all over the mottled apartment outer walls. Small critters shuttled between them. "Do not stay out in the open for too long. Staying in any building is better than being exposed in the open." Xu Qin gripped the table knife. Her red irises glowed dangerously. A chilling presence surrounded her.

"Okay." This was the first time Han Fei encountered Xu Qin in this state. From that, he knew how dangerous the outer world was. If not for Huang Yin, Han Fei would have stayed longer in Apartment 1 to complete all the possible missions before he considered leaving the place.

“Sometimes, I’ll go to Apartment 2 to grab some groceries. The lower 3 floors are relatively safe.” Licking her crimson lips, Xu Qin moved towards Apartment 2. Han Fei quickly moved to follow up. There were 2 apartment buildings in the Happiness Neighbourhood. There was a distance of 10 metres between the two buildings. While they traversed this distance, suddenly something dropped beside Han Fei, it almost landed on him. Han Fei turned to look at it and realized it was a bleeding snapped finger. Narrowing his eyes, Han Fei lifted his head upwards. Inside the old apartment building, there seemed to be monsters and ghosts hiding behind every dark window. “None of the room feels safe.”

Night enveloped the whole game world. Misfortune and eeriness permeated the air and it was no different at Happiness Neighbourhood. Han Fei did not stay to examine the finger but moved to follow Xu Qin to Apartment 2. Compared to Apartment 1, Apartment 2 was grimmer and older. The front door was not locked. The lobby reeked of blood and something horrendous. Unknown stains dirtied the stairwell.

“There is no building manager here so technically there are no rules. The tenancy has a high turnover rate. If you’re strong enough, you can stay in any room you want.” Once Xu Qin entered the building, her icy presence disappeared. However, her eyes were still startling red. Han Fei believed he even saw a shadow flickering in her iris. “There are not many original tenants left, most of them have been forcibly evacuated. Instead, the building is occupied by many non-locals and they have been trying their best to chase away the straggling original tenants.”

“That sounds immoral, looks like this building also needs a manager.” Han Fei turned his ears up but he could no longer hear Huang Yin’s voice, “Brother Huang was last heard on the 2nd floor...” Right at that moment, rapid footsteps came down the stairs, like someone was running for their lives. “Xu Qin, take a hold of yourself, this might be a friend!”

...

Huang Yin charged out from the bathroom of Room 2021. He did not expect there would be another person inside the bathroom other than himself. Other than fear, there was also an inexplicable shame. His brain buzzed. Huang Yin commanded himself to calm down but his body shook uncontrollably. Ever since the girl revealed the real items that she lost, he had not had a moment to take a breath.

Bang! Bang! Bang! The knocking returned. Huang Yin turned subconsciously to the front door. The bloody face that poked through the gap looked at Huang Yin with plain confusion on its face as well. As the man and the ghost met each other’s eyes, the door of Room 2021’s innermost bedroom was blasted open. A fatty with half of his body scorched stomped out!

He was holding a bleeding knife. His beady eyes glared at Huang Yin. A creepy smile carved on his face. "A newcomer? You look delicious!" Then he aimed his knife at Huang Yin. Huang Yin's body instinct kicked in and before his mind could fathom the situation, he was already running towards the front door. The bloody face was still there but Huang Yin's mind couldn't compute anything anymore. There was a ghost inside the bathroom, a ghost at the front door, a madman was chasing after him. There was no chance of survival, it was only a matter of how he wished to die. His throat was dry from all the shouting. When Huang Yin almost reached the front door, the bloody face suddenly shrieked. The door opened wider and Huang Yin saw a pale-faced young man closing his palm over his other bleeding wrist.

"My blood has exorcistic property but it can't hold them for long. I need you to come with me!" The young man radiated kindness. His youthful face was the first friendly face Huang Yin had seen in a long time. He waved his blood crazily about as he led Huang Yin up the stairs. Huang Yin held onto this olive branch and stuck close to the young man. With the young man's help, he successfully extricated himself from the dangerous situation for now.

"Come in and don't utter a sound!" The young man dragged Huang Yin into a room on the 6th floor. The young man eased the door closed and leaned against it. It was not until the footsteps faded away that he sighed in relief. "That was so close." The young man commented. His wrist was still bleeding.

"Thank you, thank you for saving my life!" Huang Yin repeated earnestly. He was never so frightened in his life, his eyes were still red.

"There's no need to thank me." The young man turned around and black capillaries pulsed on his previously smooth face. The capillaries were like crawling worms. "I only saved you because I can't imagine sharing you with others." His lips tore open and the man's face split open horizontally. A fountain of smelly black blood surged out from the divided face!

Huang Yin was dropped from heaven back to hell. The roller coaster of emotion froze his mind and body. He even forgot to struggle.

Bang! The thick front door was kicked down from outside. A sharp table knife pierced through the man's neck!

The curse injected itself into its prey. The knife sawed noisily and a person was thus chopped into pieces. When the young man's body parts dropped to the ground, Huang Yin raised his eyes to witness a

face that was so beautiful that it took his breath away. She bloomed in the sprays of blood. The bright lips were like a flame in the dark, mysterious and captivating.

His brain started to function again. Huang Yin was about to speak when the stench of black blood that previously flowed through the young man's body crawled into his nostrils. His intestines protested and Huang Yin started to dry heave. His body broke through its limits. His mind dulled and he dropped next to the pieces of flesh. Xu Qin had just finished procuring her latest ingredient, but Huang Yin's dry heaves got the woman's brows pleated together and the smile frozen on her face.

"Tsk, that definitely does not help my appetite."

Chapter 108:

The pale fingers tightened angrily around the table knife. As Xu Qin sauntered into the room, Han Fei quickly hurried over to hold Xu Qin back. "Please calm down, this is just a misunderstanding!" Han Fei had no idea what happened to Huang Yin. The man was good at his timing. He could have vomited sooner or later but he had to empty his stomach right before the person who would mind it the most. "The man is not a ghost, he's a living human. He was dragged here due to some unique reason." After more persuasion, Han Fei finally managed to convince Xu Qin to forgive Huang Yin.

"We better leave this place first, it's too dangerous here." The landlord's ring froze with warning. There were too many threats around them. Han Fei ran past Xu Qin and entered the room. He bent down to pick up Huang Yin but when his finger touched the man's body, the robotic voice announced, "Notification for Player 0000! Your talent, Resurrection has been successfully triggered!

"Resurrection (Unknown level): Effect 1, if you run into a lost soul and provide them a safe passage back to their body, you will obtain the reward, 1 Malice Point Reduction!

"Effect 2, if you run into a lost soul and kill them, you can transfer your own consciousness into their former body and enter a somnambulant state! This unique state can only last for a maximum of 10 minutes! You will also obtain the reward, 1 Malice Point Increment!

"Divinity of Somnambulance (Grade X Hidden Mission): No time limit. After you have entered 100 somnambulant states, you will gain the title, Divinity of Somnambulance. The title awards 10 additional points to Intelligence and comes with unknown abilities."

The string of notifications stunned Han Fei. The resurrection talent could help send the summoned soul back to their bodies, Han Fei was not that surprised to find that out, he was more surprised that he could kill the summoned soul and basically take over their body temporarily! Even though it was only for a short 10 minutes, it was still a horrifying ability.

‘After entering 100 instances of somnambulant state, I will gain the title of Divinity of Somnambulance. So far, I have been gaining 1 attribute point with each level increase. This would mean that nabbing that would provide me with rewards equivalent to a 10 level increase!’ Han Fei would be lying if he said he was not intrigued. Attribute points were hard to come by in this game. Even completing a hard mission might not reward the player with attribute points, so far the only way Han Fei could obtain them was through levelling up. ‘A 10 point increase in intelligence is alluring but...’ Han Fei soon calmed down. ‘The mission basically requires me to commit murders! To enter the somnambulant state, I will have to murder the summoned souls and take over their bodies but these souls belong to actual human beings who are still alive!’ To gain a title, he needed to kill 100 people, just the thought of it chilled Han Fei. ‘Furthermore, entering the somnambulant state will increase my malice points. It feels like this mission is purposely trying to lure out my sinister side.’

Han Fei did not plan to forgo the second effect of Resurrection but he would not harm any innocent to achieve his goal either. After giving it some rational thoughts, Han Fei came up with a solution that would not violate his own principles while enabling him to progress with the hidden mission. ‘The Divinity of Somnambulance governs the night, a fair god if employed correctly. If I only target demons that wear the coat of human skin, then it wouldn’t be so bad.’

Ming Mei’s father was a perfect candidate but unfortunately Han Fei’s Spirit Farer talent was too low, his success rate was not high. But Han Fei did not feel disappointed, after all his Perfect Life was only beginning. After knowing he had a confirmed solution to send Huang Yin back to his body, Han Fei felt more relieved.

“Big sister, it’s time for us to go home.” Han Fei picked up Huang Yin and turned around. When he saw Xu Qin, he noticed things were not right. Black fog surrounded Xu Qin’s red clothes while she stared up the staircase. “The people from upstairs are coming.” The sound of heart beating echoed inside the corridor. Xu Qin grabbed Han Fei by his hand. “We need to leave now!”

The two ran down the stairs but their path was blocked at the 4th floor. The fatty stood in the middle of the stairs. His beady eyes stared at Huang Yin and Han Fei greedily, “So he’s been brought here...” His mouth opened to reveal uneven teeth. The fatty then charged over with a growl. He raised the blade

and a wicked laughter boomed from his chest. But before he could attempt any attack, a stained table knife already pierced down his throat. Xu Qin moved too fast for the fatty to even react.

His size worked against him in terms of speed but then it also made him incredibly hard to kill. The knife into the throat did not appear to even injure him, if anything, it only angered the fat man. Black blood oozed out from the scar. The fatty grabbed his blade and struck at Xu Qin. Xu Qin evaded it with ease and sliced off the man's hand that held the blade. The curse from the table knife crawled into the fat man's body. Earlier, after the curse intruded into the young man's body, he lasted less than a second but the curse seemed to have no effect on the fatty. The puncture through his throat took away his ability of speech. Instead, he groaned and howled like a beast.

Eventually Xu Qin would slice through the fat man but the problem was the heartbeat from upstairs was rapidly approaching. She would not be able to dispatch the fat man in a short amount of time. The table knife stabbed into the fat man's body but his folds of fat shielded his vitals from harm. While the fat man was distracted by Xu Qin, a human figure slithered up close and then ambushed the fat man!

"I will not spare any mercy on you non-locals!" Han Fei identified the man from his scorch marks. He remembered seeing this fat man in the group photo that the non-locals from Apartment 1's 6th floor once showed him. Han Fei aimed to kill. This was the first time he used the ability, Soul-Depth Touch. When his hand landed on the fat man, a concentrated dose of anger and malice drilled into Han Fei's brain. The non-local's soul only had pain and desire for murder in it. These non-locals had no humanity left in them, their goal in life was to destroy.

During the moment of contact, both Han Fei and the fatty froze for several seconds. Xu Qin used this break in the man's defence to make a clean cut across the man's flabby neck. The man teetered off balance from the attack. Han Fei swiped the blade from the man and following the man's falling momentum, plunged the blade right into his heart. The fight attracted the attention of two other tenants with burnt bodies from the same floor. They quickly moved to block the exit. Han Fei readied the blade to fight but Xu Qin signalled for him to retreat. "Keep moving!"

Xu Qin was not concerned about the two non-locals but the heartbeat in the stairwell. The heartbeat was like some ritualistic drums. Listen to it long enough and you'd find your heartbeat aligning with its rhythm. You might even think the heartbeat came right from your own chest.

Chapter 109:

“We must go!” Xu Qin’s state was quite unstable. The more she used her table knife, the more glaring the blood on the knife and the brighter the smile on her face. But there was an unfamiliarity in her cruel smile, like there was another personality showing through. Murder turned the curse stronger and crazier. After Xu Qin chopped down another non-local, the heartbeat finally appeared behind Xu Qin and Han Fei.

Dong! Dong! Dong! The heavy beat spread fear. Han Fei could feel his own heart squeeze with pain as he turned around to look. A ghost with a human-faced butterfly tattooed on its chest stood in the corridor. Its heart was hanging out of its body and the heart twitched with each beat. To Han Fei’s distress, there appeared to be a Human Cocoon residing inside the ghost’s beating heart. ‘The Human Cocoon is used to control these spirits?’ Han Fei stood beside Xu Qin, he wanted to stay to help Xu Qin out but the latter softly nudged him away. “Go down the stairs now.”

“We will leave together.”

“I can’t control myself any longer.” Xu Qin bit on her fingers and blood dripped on her lips. Her expression turned more and more unfamiliar. “The urge to slice and dice everything is getting more prominent. If you do not leave now, I’m afraid I might end up chopping you into dinner.” As Xu Qin’s eyes landed on him, Han Fei’s hairs stood on end. Her gaze became so distant, like she was no longer looking at a friend but a plate of delicious food. Han Fei knew he would not be of much help to Xu Qin, plus he also had to take care of Huang Yin, so indeed the most rational solution was to escape with Huang Yin while Xu Qin held the enemies back.

His heart pumped with more pronounced pain. The pain appeared to be a kind of curse too. The closer the ghost approached, the stronger the curse became. Han Fei had no idea how to extricate himself from the curse other than to keep a distance. Seeing Han Fei’s intention to escape, the ghost with the exterior heart immediately jumped into battle with Xu Qin. Despite the cuts on its body, as long as none landed on the heart, the ghost itself would not be injured. Xu Qin paid a heavy price to ensure Han Fei’s escape. Her dead heart pounded rapidly. Blood threads surfaced on her skin. They pulsed madly like blood was surging too rapidly through her veins.

More and more blood and shredded flesh littered the corridor. Both Xu Qin and the ghost had lost their minds, they succumbed to madness. Suddenly at that moment, a door on the 4th floor opened. A middle-aged woman covered in bruises and scars appeared out of thin air and attacked the butterfly-tattooed ghost!

A long drape of hair trailed behind her. Hair also continued to fall from the ceiling and melted into her body. The more wounded she was, the stronger her resentment. The room that the woman came out

from was covered with bloody hair, the place was like a cage weaved out of braided bloody locks. 'Isn't that the room where Brother Huang first cried for help? He sure was lucky to land right in the scariest room at this building.' Han Fei kept his eyes on the newcomer. She seemed to have a deep-seated hatred towards the non-locals and the butterfly-tattooed spirits.

Perhaps she was too weak to handle them alone because she did not make her move until Xu Qin appeared to provide her with this opportunity.

The spirit was sliced through again and again but it regenerated itself endlessly. This appeared to be a stalemate but Han Fei noticed the time required for the spirit to reconstruct itself also became longer. When Xu Qin slashed through the spirit for the 7th time and the thing disintegrated into blocks of meat, a wave of black hair emerged from Room 2044. It swept up all the broken meat and rolled them back into Room 2044. With her goal accomplished, the middle-aged woman allowed herself to be washed away with her hair.

Xu Qin chased after her prey relentlessly. She shot towards Room 2044 but the door slammed right in her face. The black hair curled around the door handle. Xu Qin chopped at the door like crazy.

"Xu Qin!" Carrying Huang Yin on his back, Han Fei hurried to Xu Qin's side. But when Xu Qin turned towards him, an indescribable chill crawled up his spine. Wailing human faces flashed within Xu Qin's red eyes. Her table knife flew at Han Fei's face!

The bloody tip stopped right before Han Fei's eye. Xu Qin bit on her lips and blood trickled down her chin. Unable to speak, Xu Qin pulled her knife back and rushed down the stairs. She moved at least twice as fast as before. There were other non-locals along the way but when Han Fei arrived, they were mostly shredded already. Han Fei dealt the final blows on these straggling souls as he chased after Xu Qin. He still had a mission for his hidden occupation. He had to kill 10 non-locals before he reached level 10.

Xu Qin had done such heavy damage that Han Fei did not take long to deal with all the dying non-locals. With Huang Yin on his back, Han Fei returned to Apartment 1. He knew Xu Qin was not in a good state so he left Huang Yin with Meng Si. After saying a few words with Meng Si, Han Fei hurried to the 5th floor. Along the way, there was a heavy trail of blood. Some of them belonged to others and some belonged to Xu Qin. The door to Xu Qin's room was not closed. A hair-raising engorging sound came from within. Han Fei quietly slipped into the room. He saw Xu Qin standing inside the kitchen. She grabbed various kinds of meat and stuffed them into her face.

She engulfed the food without chewing. She chomped down on the food so ferociously that she bit her own fingers several times but she did not seem to mind it. Soon all the meat inside the kitchen was gone. Xu Qin stomped out into the living room and grabbed the condiment bottles from the dining table. She unscrewed them and tossed the flavorful wandering souls down her throat. Xu Qin was a woman who fed on ghosts, only by feeding that the pain from her curse could be alleviated. Her normal grace was gone, all that was left was a bottomless appetite.

Blood stained her clothes. After devouring the 'food' made from monsters and ghosts, Xu Qin's expression finally returned to normal.

"That must have been a scary scene for you, ain't it?" Blood slid down Xu Qin's cheeks. Her face was dirty with blood stains. Her fingers were bitten to their bones. She knew how scary she must have looked to Han Fei. She stood alone amidst the aftermath of her feast, surrounded by loneliness and shame.

Tearing out a piece from his shirt, Han Fei walked over to Xu Qin. He carefully helped her bandage her hands. "I hope they don't hurt that much now."

After ushering Xu Qin over to the couch, Han Fei found the broom and started to clean up. As he swept up the broken bits, he asked casually, "Is there a way to cleanse the curse from your body?"

Xu Qin appeared to come back then. She studied her hands and shook her head. "I am her and she is me."

"Then you better stop worrying about the grocery-shopping in the future, I will help procure your groceries for you." Han Fei smiled at Xu Qin. "Your hobby is to work with recipes, so you should focus on that. Leave the heavy labor to me."

"Even after all you've seen, you are still willing to help me? Aren't you afraid of me?"

"What is there to be afraid of?" Han Fei sat down beside Xu Qin and said with a warm smile. "To be honest, you've saved my life so many times that even if you do turn me into your dish, I won't have any complaints about it."

Chapter 110:

In this despair-filled world, Han Fei gave Xu Qin something rare. Monsters and ghosts hid behind every corner and a wrong step would lead to death, hope was impossible to foster here but that was the thing that Han Fei offered Xu Qin. Han Fei had once himself turned away from hope. He blamed destiny and life, he was too lazy to even struggle anymore. But after starting Perfect Life, he knew loss of hope was not the scariest, instead the scariest thing was never having the chance to even taste hope before.

After getting to know his neighbours, Han Fei could feel the change to his perspective, he realized how strong his yearning for life was, how much he wanted to live. His life was indeed changed by this lyashikei game and now it was time for him to share the lessons that he had learned with others. Xu Qin was mad according to the system, in fact the system labelled her a Curse Amalgamation but so what? From Han Fei's perspective, Xu Qin had saved his life multiple times and that was more than enough.

"You should rest now. I'll be waiting for you to invite me back for dinner." Han Fei looked out the window. He saw the horizonless despair and the empty streets in front of Happiness Neighbourhood. "After we explore all the neighbouring locales, we should consider opening a restaurant on this street. With how delicious your cooking is, I'm sure we'll have lots of customers. Perhaps we can help heal their souls through your cooking too." After staying for a while longer, Han Fei left the 5th floor.

...

Huang Yin's heavily impacted consciousness slowly recovered. The moment he opened his eyes, his body curled involuntarily together. His mind was still shaking.

"You're finally awake?" A kind voice entered his ears. Huang Yin turned to the voice with alertness. Under the dim lights, an old lady walked out from the kitchen carrying a bowl. "I noticed how weak your body was so I cooked a bowl of porridge for you. Here, eat it while it's hot."

The television set was playing a normal advertisement. The room was decorated like it was from 10 years ago, it was simple but homely. "I remember I was being chased by ghosts..." Huang Yin sat for a long time in the bed. He realized he could not remember his memory that clearly, it felt like someone had whacked the memory out of his mind.

“That was probably a bad dream.” The old lady handed the bowl to Huang Yin. “I found you collapsed in the corridor so I carried you in. I was afraid that you might catch a cold so I tucked you in bed, but you started rambling about some nonsensical stuff.”

“Was it really a dream? But everything felt so real.” Huang Yin tried to sit up in bed. The delicious smell of the porridge brightened his mood. The exhausted man reached out for the bowl. The piping hot porridge warmed his cheeks. Huang Yin took a cautious sip. The warmth trickled down his throat and into his stomach. It was scrumptious. Holding the bowl in disbelief, the gory images slowly returned to the man. There was a woman who crawled on the ceiling like a spider, the murderer whose body was scorched, and the young man who tricked him. The horror overwhelmed him and he remembered he pleaded uselessly for help. He shook his head to chase the thoughts away. He turned back to the bowl of porridge in his hands. It was a simple porridge but it brought him an indescribable sense of warmth. He had never tasted such a healing porridge before. Holding the bowl with both hands, Huang Yin found his earlier unshed tears falling down his face.

“Child, what’s wrong?” The old lady was concerned about Huang Yin. She picked up the napkin and handed it to him. “You’re too old to be crying like that. But no matter, let it out all. Granny is here for you.”

“It’s nothing.” Huang Yin sniffed and rubbed at his puffy eyes. “Your porridge is too delicious, it reminds me of my mother’s cooking. She has already passed away.”

“I’m sorry to hear that.”

Huang Yin took a big gulp of the porridge despite the heat. Then he started to open up, “I was a very naughty boy. One winter, I ran out to the lake to play. I accidentally skidded and fell. The layer of ice was very thin, so I dropped through it. I cried for help. My mom jumped in without hesitation. She used everything she had to push me to the surface but she was too weak to haul herself up.”

“You had a wonderful mother.”

“I’ve been blaming myself ever since. At my current age, I have more than enough money to get anything I want. But I can’t say that I’m happy but I’m not sad either, it just feels like there’s something missing.” Sipping on the old lady’s porridge, Huang Yin’s eyes were still red. “I rarely tell people these things, sometimes I can even convince myself that I’ve already gotten over it but earlier in that nightmare, I believe I saw my mom again.”

“You saw your mother earlier?” The old lady repeated in shock.

“In that endless horror, just when I thought I was going to die, when I had finally given up, she appeared again.” Huang Yin tried his best to think. “Just like when I was young, she saved me from the edge of death. She entered deep into my nightmare to rescue me.”

“You sure you saw the right person?”

“I can’t really say. But in that horrible nightmare, who else can it be? At least the person who came to my rescue reminded me very much of my mother.” Huang Yin’s hand went to his heart. “This game is always able to capture the softest light in people’s heart, perhaps it is trying to use that nightmare to heal this scar that I didn’t even know I had...” While Huang Yin mumbled to himself, the bedroom door opened. A boy walked out. When he saw the food on the table, he opened his mouth to say, “I’m not going to eat anything from the co...”

Before he could finish, the old lady rushed over to clamp her hands over his mouth.

Rubbing his eyes, Huang Yin finished the porridge. “I don’t know why I am telling these things to an in-game NPC. Regardless...” He stood up and gave the old lady a deep bow. Then he took out many items from his inventory and placed them on the table. “Thank you for your porridge. But there is one last thing I need to confirm before my mind can truly rest!”

Then, under the old lady and young boy’s confused gazes, Huang Yin walked towards the bathroom. He grabbed the door handle and turned back to take in the small room. “Perhaps this is the true meaning of the hidden map. The game lives up to its name, it really does go straight into your heart to touch your soul.” His hand pressed on the handle. When the door of the bathroom opened, a hand landed on his back. Endless Yin energy surged in a whirlpool. Huang Yin dissolved into a slip of red light and disappeared back into the blood red menu. The menu slowly returned to normal. Han Fei who just utilized the Resurrection talent fell to the ground. “The exhaustion from using Resurrection is so heavy? It feels like my body has been hollowed out.”

Actually Han Fei already arrived at Meng Si’s place before Huang Yin woke. He was worried about Huang Yin’s condition so he hid inside the bedroom to observe. It was not until he made sure Huang Yin was fine that he sent the man back to the surface world.