

Iyashikei 191

Chapter 191:

They were so close that Han Fei had no chance to react. The only thing he could do was to close the door to Room 206. Trundling footsteps came from the corridors. Ma Manjiang's snarl was like a signal and it summoned the other monsters who had been hiding inside the building. Echoes of shouts came from outside the building, the entire student body had surrounded the hostel. With the experience from before, this time Ma Manjiang left no chance up to fate. He put up layers of trap to deprive Han Fei of the choice to even commit suicide.

Bang! The lock on the door loosened. The door was too fragile to withstand something as large as Ma Manjiang. 'The time for hiding is over.' Han Fei's face was void of normal human emotions. He had O' Lee hide in the upper bunk while he turned towards the balcony. Among the thick fog, twisted figures flicked in and out of sight. All the monsters had been called to the hostel building. A normal manager mission should not be this difficult, this was all that blue butterfly's fault. It had made use of its advantage to its maximum, refusing to give Han Fei any chance to survive.

'For this rebirth, I've found everything I need. It's pointless to commit suicide now, it'll only make me lose even more memories.' Han Fei gripped the cup shard tightly in his left hand. He stood on the balcony of Room 206. Inside the building, outside the building, everywhere he turned, there were howling souls and distorted monsters.

Bang! The wooden door was slammed through, the door banged hard against the wall. When Ma Manjiang saw Han Fei, he did not hesitate and charged at his target immediately! He needed to prevent Han Fei from killing himself. This time he would slowly torture Han Fei until he got the information he needed from the man. Dark red blood oozed out from Ma Manjiang's chest. The blood crawled over the giant body to form a creepy pattern of butterfly wings. The blue butterfly inside Ma Manjiang's body flapped its wings excitedly when it saw Han Fei!

Han Fei only managed to press the shard against his neck when Ma Manjiang reached the space before him. The 3 mouths on his face yawned like 3 abysses. Ma Manjiang did not go for Han Fei's vitals. He needed to keep Han Fei alive. The man probably even realized that Han Fei carried the secret of the black box.

The startlingly white jaws bit into Han Fei's arm. They crunched through the bone. Han Fei's hand that held the sharp weakened. Ma Manjiang swung his head about like a beast, trying to tear Han Fei's arm apart from his body. Then he would work on the rest of Han Fei's limbs. The point was to incapacitate

his victim. He couldn't care less about the pain and despair he'd cause in others, this was the purest sin in humanity.

While Ma Manjiang was fully distracted by Han Fei's offending left arm with the glass shard, Ol' Lee who was in the upper bunk jumped out. He picked up the wooden chair in the room and slammed it against Ma Manjiang's head. The wood splintered and the chair cracked but it left not even a scar on Ma Manjiang. Nothing that came from this school could harm Ma Manjiang. However, Ol' Lee did not give up because of that. With bloodshot eyes, he jumped on Ma Manjiang's back and applied a chokehold on the monster from behind. "Young man, go! Leave!"

The silver hair mixed with blood. Ol' Lee howled as he slammed his fists repeatedly into Ma Manjiang's ugly head to get the monster to let go of Han Fei.

"Damn you! I never wanted to kill you in real life but you've been seeking death!" The face on Ma Manjiang's chest grimaced in hatred. He gripped behind him and shook his body violently.

Then came the sound of bones snapping. Han Fei's left arm was cracked. But he had also gotten close to Ma Manjiang. With Ol' Lee providing the best distraction, this was the opening Han Fei was looking for!

His uninjured right hand took out the scissors draped in hatred. All of the deaths and sacrifices were made for this moment. The chill exploded in the room. When Ma Manjiang's face turned around, he seemed to see a demon that crawled out from hell. With blood all over his body, Han Fei's face lit up with a mirthless smile. "It's time for you to die!"

The blades easily cut through Ma Manjiang's leathery skin. The tough exterior was vulnerable before the scissors. The human face at the chest was punctured. Gripping the scissors by the handle, Han Fei slid it further down. Ma Manjiang finally had a taste of pain after so many years, his black blood splattered around the bedroom. As a countermeasure, Ma Manjiang bit further into Han Fei's left arm. Ignoring Ol' Lee, Ma Manjiang's burly arms swung at Han Fei again. However, Han Fei already had the next step of his plan in place.

He peeled the scissors out from Ma Manjiang and then aimed it right at his left shoulder. The arm was a bait to distract Ma Manjiang, it had already accomplished its mission. After dying for more than 10 times, the pain from live amputation barely registered in his mind anymore. After abandoning his left arm, Han Fei crawled through Ma Manjiang's split stomach and into the monster's body!

Inside Ma Manjiang's horrible smelling, atrocious looking stomach, there were many different faces. They had different expressions but whenever they saw Han Fei, they would bite madly at his body. With wounds all over his body, Han Fei gritted his teeth and waved the scissors around. Ma Manjiang's pained wails echoed around the school. He slammed his body into the wall and his big arms reached into his own stomach. Blood and flesh rolled about. When Ma Manjiang caught Han Fei's legs, the latter also found a human head trapped inside scabs of dried blood inside the monster's stomach!

Jin Sheng!

The human head's eyes were closed and the expression was pained. It was covered in blood but Han Fei still managed to identify the young man with one look. Han Fei reached out to hug the human head while he was being pulled out by his legs. As Ma Manjiang dragged him through the folds of flesh, Han Fei tried his best to poke the scissors right at Ma Manjiang's heart because that was where the blue butterfly was residing. Even if he had to lose both of his legs, Han Fei had to hurt that butterfly!

Compared to Jin Sheng's head, the butterfly was clearly more concerned about itself. Even though it controlled Ma Manjiang carefully, half of its wings were still clipped by the scissors. The strange pattern that covered Ma Manjiang's body faded by half. The blue butterfly went berserk. It was determined to drag Han Fei out from Ma Manjiang's body but Han Fei's determination to kill was not to be trifled with either. He did not mind losing all of his limbs, but this loop, the damn blue butterfly inside Ma Manjiang's heart had to die!

Han Fei knew very well that this kind of chance would not come ever again. This was an opportunity that he had traded with multiple deaths!

The battle was gory and primitive. Han Fei's femurs shattered but the butterfly was not doing so well either. The blood of both parties dyed the room red. Just as Han Fei aimed another plunge at Ma Manjiang's heart, the large monster trundled towards the balcony. The thing wanted to fall through the building and used its weight to crush Han Fei inside him. Blood showered the wind.

Bang! The body slammed into the ground and bones and guts damaged from the fall. Crimson red blood coughed out from Han Fei's lips. He was dying. Other than his right hand, he could not feel the other parts of his body anymore. Ma Manjiang was not faring much better than Han Fei. His stomach was spliced right open but more importantly, the butterfly was heavily injured!

The pretty blue butterfly wings were clipped in many places. It lost the energy to fully control Ma Manjiang. The grey fog around the school rolled away and the visibility became much better.

“Let’s go!” Ol’ Lee slid down the pipe from the 2nd floor. He picked up Jin Sheng’s head and tried to carry the injured Han Fei.

“The back entrance key is in Ma Manjiang’s pocket.” Even at that moment, Han Fei’s mind was thinking clearly. There was only one last step to his plan. Ol’ Lee took out the key from Ma Manjiang’s pocket. He shouldered Han Fei and prepared to run but the other monsters were closing in. The heavily-injured Ma Manjiang slowly crawled up from the ground. His ugliest face was pasted on his chest as he stared darkly at Han Fei, “You’re not getting away that easily!”

Ma Manjiang’s sons dropped the dying Wild Hound to the ground. Then, he led his friends out from the hostel front door. From the education block, the bespectacled Lee Xun and Lee Jingmei who was silenced and blinded by golden threads rushed over with the students. Everyone’s face was twisted in hatred. Their eyes glowed with intense hatred for Jin Sheng and Han Fei. They were surrounded.

“Get to the field.” Han Fei whispered to Ol’ Lee. “Try to lure them there.” The ghosts were closing in, Ol’ Lee had no choice but to follow Han Fei’s order. He dragged Han Fei and hurried towards the field. Going to the open field was no different from suicide. Ma Manjiang slowly steadied himself. He rubbed his stomach and controlled all the ghosts in the school to chase after Han Fei. In just a few minutes, Ol’ Lee and Han Fei were cornered, they were trapped in the middle of the field.

After Ma Manjiang was heavily injured, the oppressing grey fog had faded greatly but that only gave Ol’ Lee and Han Fei a clearer view of their imminent deaths. Almost everyone at the school was standing against them. All the faces were twisted beyond rationality.

“Ma Manjiang is the real killer! He has raped that poor girl!” Ol’ Lee exclaimed futilely. The students had no ears to listen to him. Lee Xun and Lee Jingmei already knew the truth but they chose to side with the monster.

Snap!

The cracked Chuxia was shoved out from the crowd. Lee Xun yanked her up by her hair and forced her to look at Ma Manjiang. The girl was so afraid that her body was trembling. Facing the three adult teachers, she just wanted to hide. The cracks on her body started to fall. Her once beating heart died. Light departed from her eyes. She finally slumped her head and collapsed to the ground.

Wild Hound, Zhang Guanxing wheezed helplessly among the bushes. The 60 plus Ol' Lee shielded Han Fei as he forced the students back. But eventually blood gashes appeared on his body. The ending was determined. The female teacher was murdered, Wild Hound was dying, Ol' Lee was overwhelmed. Facing the endless ghosts and monsters from the school, Han Fei held the head in his chest.

"Is it because of these that you have chosen death in the end?" Despair, helplessness, there was no one Jin Sheng could trust and rely on in his world anymore.

"Your deaths have not changed anything." Ma Manjiang who was controlled by the blue butterfly stood among the crowd. His broken face was coloured with venom and condescension. "Other than these few dead ghosts, no one will believe Jin Sheng, he will never escape from this school! Never! And you will stay here forever as well!"

All the monsters had gathered at the field, there was no escape.

"Even with the grey fog gone, the world is so despairingly oppressive, is that why you still refuse to open your eyes?" Han Fei looked around. All the monsters at the school, including Ma Manjiang were encroaching on him and Ol' Lee. "I can understand your pain now but I wish to tell you one more thing." He had Ol' Lee shove the back entrance's key into Jin Sheng's mouth but the key was stuck inside the thick blood scab. It barely touched Jin Sheng. "Even though the world might be horrible, as long as we never give up, there will be people who are willing to believe in us!" Han Fei raised Jin Sheng's head in his right arm and his face deepened with unbridled madness. "I'll prove it to you."

Blood rained as his consciousness entered the menu. Han Fei held Jin Sheng's decapitated head high and his bloody lips uttered the two words. "Spirit Farer!"

The menu was submerged in red. It creaked open like the door of hell. Ghost faces with names between their bites rushed out!

After Han Fei attempted and failed to control the sea of ghost faces, he grabbed a passing empty face and wrote down Huang Yin's name. The blood sea boiled. Jin Sheng's world shook. In an extremely short amount of time, a ghost face leaped out from the sea and escaped from the door. Han Fei kept his eyes on the ghost face. The summoned spirit would appear anywhere 100 metres around him, Han Fei could not control the location. Han Fei prayed that the person would land far away from the crowd of monsters. After the door of hell closed, a figure materialized between the field and the front door!

Huang Yin landed on his butt and then he heard Han Fei's screeching yell. "Huang Yin!"

Using his last bit of strength, Han Fei lobbed Jin Sheng's head over the crowd towards Huang Yin. "Run! Take it and leave this school!"

Han Fei had no other option left. He was in the middle of a manager mission, his menu was greyed out. He could not quit the game or access his inventory. Of all his active skills, only Spirit Farer was usable because it too was a manager talent.

The plan was to use Spirit Farer to mobilize a greater demon from the sea of blood but Han Fei was still too weak to manipulate the sea. In the end, he placed his last hope on Huang Yin instead. There was no hurdle on the field. He was able to spot Huang Yin easily. The school's front gate was open and the back gate's key was in Jin Sheng's mouth. No matter where Huang Yin appeared, be it near the front or back door, he would be able to escape easily. Han Fei had done everything he could, he would leave the rest to fate.

Huang Yin was stunned. When he turned to Han Fei's voice, he saw the man who was barely in human shape anymore. He had no idea what happened but in that moment, he chose to believe in Han Fei. Jin Sheng's head fell near him. If he was not a doctor, he would have run away in fear already. Picking up Jin Sheng's head, Huang Yin's face was drained of blood. When Huang Yin lifted his head again, the monsters on the field were already moving towards him.

Without another order from Han Fei, he knew what to do. Hugging Jin Sheng's head, Huang Yin charged towards the school's front gate as fast as he could!

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Huang Yin's mind was buzzing blank. He did not dare to even turn around. Every single cell in his body was giving him a singular command—Run! Running at the top of his speed, a cloud of monsters surged towards Huang Yin. Frantic footsteps, spine-tingling shrieks and angry roars, the whole school of ghosts was trailing behind him!

Due to Ma Manjiang's heavy injury, the grey fog had faded by a lot. Huang Yin was like the first ray to shoot through the dark clouds. He hugged Jin Sheng's head and came closer and closer to the front gate.

Yi Ming Private Academy's students and teachers chased behind the man but they were lagging behind. Ma Manjiang shoved the students aside brutally out of anger and desperation.

Seeing Huang Yin was about to get Jin Sheng's head out from the school and escape from this cage, Ma Manjiang emitted an earth-splitting growl. His body melted into black blood. All the negative emotions and despair wrapped around a blue butterfly that flew out from his heart!

The butterfly flapped its broken wings and flew above the crowd. It rapidly closed the distance between it and Huang Yin. Noticing this, Han Fei knew that they had the blue butterfly cornered. The butterfly was cunning, cruel, merciless and crazy. With it having the full advantage, it did not expect Han Fei to tip one over it. From its perspective, Han Fei was doing an impossible mission, but somehow Han Fei had carved a bloody solution out of it.

The tattered wings thrashed, the malice cutting through the fog, forming strange patterns in the air. The butterfly swooped towards Huang Yin!

When Huang Yin was 1 metre away from the front gate, the butterfly caught up to its target. A waterfall of malice poured down around Huang Yin. The moment the blue butterfly landed the man's head, Huang Yin also managed to take the first step out from the front gate. The curse of the inescapable cage was shattered. Jin Sheng had successfully escaped from the school that was made from his despairing memories!

The moment Jin Sheng's head left the school compound, the young man's previously closed eyes fluttered open. The scabs formed by dried malice and despair dissolved. The eyes frozen in pain finally saw the world again. The scenario in Jin Sheng's memory world started to shift. Black curse and red blood gushed out from Jin Sheng's decapitated neck. These curses and blood congealed to form his new body.

The blue butterfly knew when it had been beaten. When the manager woke up, all the power would go towards him. Remaining inside this world would only mean a tortured death. It flapped its wings again, causing the pattern on its blue wings to change once more. The pattern started to take on the shape of Huang Yin's face, the blue butterfly was imprinting Huang Yin into its memory. This time it had lost because of this man. In other words, Huang Yin was the first man to have ever defeated the butterfly.

When Jin Sheng reached out towards the blue butterfly, the wings exploded and the body dissolved in blue dust and disappeared into nothingness.

“I’m surprised that someone can walk out from my despair.” Jin Sheng turned to glance at Huang Yin and then strode back towards the field. The students and staff members molded from his memory faded away like the wind. In the end, only Huang Yin, Han Fei and Jin Sheng were left on the empty field.

“See, as long as we don’t give up, there is always hope.” Han Fei laid on the ground. His left arm was severed, both his legs were snapped, he had bone fractures all over his body and he suffered internal bleeding from the fall. Whenever he spoke, blood spurted out from his lips.

“Why did you help me?” Jin Sheng looked just like the picture of himself in real life but his body was made from curses and blood. He was a very special ghost.

“Why did Ol’ Lee, your class teacher and the rest choose to help you?” With trembling fingers, Han Fei slowly raised his moveable right hand, “Now can you help me?”

Jin Sheng studied Han Fei for a long time before he grabbed Han Fei’s hand. Finally, among the abyss of despair, Han Fei had found the real Jin Sheng.

The moment their hands touched, the school grounds fell away. Han Fei’s lost memories returned like waves.

“Notification for Player 0000! You’ve completed the Grade F Manager Mission—Patrolling Teacher! You’ve obtained triple EXP, 2 basic skill points and Grade F Manager Title—Yi Ming Private Academy’s Patrolling Teacher!

“Patrolling Teacher (Grade F Manager Title): Increase friendliness level with all natives of Yi Ming Private Academy by 10 points! Increase friendless level with Jin Sheng by an extra 10 points! Overall curse resistance to school-based cursed objects increase by 5 percent! You can now freely enter and leave the hidden map, Yi Ming Private Academy!

“Warning! The suggested level for players to attempt Grade F Missions is from level 10 to 20. Since the mission difficulty was too high for the player’s current level, the system will provide the player with additional reward from completing it! You’ve obtained the extra reward—Talent Upgrade!

“Grade F Manager Talent, Spirit Farer has grown to Grade E Talent! The effect has improved!

“Spirit Farer (Upgradeable Talent, Grade E): Possess a large chance to summon a player with spiritual affinity in person before the user. The player can decide the rough location where the spirit would arrive. Can only be used twice per night.

“Warning! The higher the talent of Spirit Farer, the greater the chance you’ll summon something unexpected. Please use this talent cautiously!

“Notification for Player 0000! You’ve reached level 9, obtained reward, 1 free attribute point!”

The pain brought by the regained memories dulled. Han Fei slowly crawled up from the ground. He stared at Huang Yin who was gobsmacked and Jin Sheng who was still curled inside the infirmary cupboard. He turned to look out the corridor. There was Ma Manjiang unravelling in a pool of black blood. After many dangers, he finally completed the Manager Mission and exited Jin Sheng’s memory world.

“Jin Sheng, was it you who killed Ma Manjiang?” Han Fei moved his feet, his soles were already stained with Ma Manjiang’s blood.

“No, it was that blue butterfly who did this. The butterfly was heavily injured in my memory world, it knew that I had awakened. To regain its power to escape from this school, it drained Ma Manjiang of his resentment and life force.” Jin Sheng looked frail. His body was covered in symbols and words. He radiated a presence that only a cursed object would.

“What exactly happened at Yi Ming Private Academy? Why would Ma Manjiang appear here?” Han Fei had so many questions.

Instead of answering Han Fei, Jin Sheng stared at him for a long time before asking, “What is your relationship to Fu Sheng?”

“Fu Sheng?” Han Fei was surprised to hear this name. He chose to go with the truth. “We lived in the same neighbourhood. He was the previous manager but he went missing. One of the big reasons I came here is to find him.”

“He has gone missing?” Jin Sheng slowly explained, “He once promised me to help me silence the despair and pain. I believed him. He sealed up my memory and power, he did many things to my soul but in the end, I still could not escape from the shackles of my memory. Due to his experimentations, I went berserk.”

“And then what happened?”

“He forced me into this cupboard and that was the last time I saw him.” Jin Sheng’s tone was so even that one would think he was a robot. No shine of humanity could be discerned from the young man.

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“So he has tricked you?” Han Fei frowned. The previous building manager had chosen the path to destroy the cryptic world, his attitude towards ghosts was naturally different from Han Fei.

“Not really, because you’re here. Before he left, he said that if he ever disappeared, someone else would come in his place to help me.” Jin Sheng was trapped in despair but his worldview was simple and optimistic. However, it went against the barren of emotion that was the boy’s face.

“Then I guess he did live up to his promise.” Han Fei worked out the kinks in his arms. Thinking back to the near brushes with death in the manager mission, he shivered from fear. “Did Fu Sheng tell you anything else? Like things that he’d told you to relay to his replacement?”

After staring at Han Fei for a while, Jin Sheng slowly spoke, “He said his body has been split into many parts, he told me the location for one of the parts. He said that I should only reveal that location to someone whom I can trust.”

“Someone whom you can trust?” Han Fei believed the parts of the body were the previous manager’s memory fragments.

“Yes.” Before Han Fei could say anything else, Jin Sheng wrote down the name, Ziggurat on his arm. From further conversation, Han Fei got to know the deeper history. The previous manager wanted to help Jin Sheng walk out from despair. His intention was good but he had failed. While Jin Sheng was

sealed up, the butterfly led outsiders to take over Yi Ming Private Academy. The butterfly wanted to gain access to Jin Sheng. The butterfly and its cronies turned the school upside down but they failed to find Jin Sheng. Meanwhile the natives at the school tried to keep the outsiders at bay but it was a losing battle with the butterfly buttressing up the outsiders with its cunningness. After Fu Sheng mysteriously disappeared, the fight skewed even further against the natives. If Han Fei had come sooner, the natives at Yi Ming Private Academy might have been fully consumed by Ma Manjiang and the only tales of horror left at the school would be the one and only Ma Manjiang.

“Jin Sheng, can you tell me what exactly happened at this school so many years ago?” Han Fei looked at Jin Sheng sincerely. Jin Sheng, who was numb to everything, told the story without any break in emotion. He reconstructed every single detail of the incidents that once occurred at Yi Ming Private Academy. Most of the people involved were dead and the source of all these tragedies was Ma Manjiang. Using a tone that was almost serene, Jin Sheng shared his tales of endless struggle. After more and more people fell to Ma Manjiang’s cruelty because of him, Jin Sheng did not choose to surrender to Ma Manjiang, instead he chose to end his own life. He walked within the endless haze of despair, he was hated by everyone but Jin Sheng would rather injure himself than lay a finger on others.

“Honestly, I don’t understand why I was so hated. Perhaps many people don’t really know why they hated me, maybe they felt that way because their friends did too.” When Jin Sheng said that in a detached manner, Han Fei’s heart quivered. “Ma Manjiang is a master manipulator but he himself is a monster dominated by desire. There is something else living inside his body, I don’t know what it is but I am sure of its existence.”

“You mean the blue butterfly?”

“I’m not sure but it appears to adopt the form of a faded consciousness. I encountered many instances where Ma Manjiang was talking to himself, conversing with another voice that was only audible to him.” Jin Sheng provided Han Fei with a valuable clue, “But every time, Ma Manjiang would refer to that other existence as Teacher.”

“The Butterfly was Ma Manjiang’s teacher?” Han Fei was reminded of the old detective’s speculation. They believed the Butterfly was in the medical or education field. The killer of the Human Jigsaw Case, Meng Changan was treated by a doctor when he was young and that doctor was the Butterfly who led him into the abyss of darkness. ‘Just how did Butterfly manage to take on so many different personas at one time?’

Han Fei did not know Meng Changan that well, in fact, he had not even interacted with the man. It was mostly Meng Changxi’s and the police who dealt with Meng Changan.

However, Ma Manjiang was Han Fei's direct nemesis in Jin Sheng's memory world. The man was cunning, cruel, heartless and crazy. Beyond that, he had incredible mastery over human psychology. He was thus far the most difficult enemy Han Fei had ever faced. Han Fei had to put everything on the line to fight for a chance at survival. If everything was to start over, Han Fei did not have the confidence he would reach the same ending.

'Even a student of the Butterfly is so scary, then just how evil the real Butterfly must be?' Han Fei tightened his fists. No matter how scary this Butterfly was, Han Fei would have to face it because even if he did not, the Butterfly would come after him. 'The fact that the Butterfly managed to send Ma Manjiang into the cryptic world suggests that the Butterfly has access to a wealth of secrets and knowledge. Perhaps they even know the way to reach the real world from the cryptic world.'

While Han Fei was parsing these information, Jin Sheng was reminded of something. "If you're that interested in the blue butterfly, you should go and visit the Ziggurat."

"The Ziggurat?" Han Fei came across the mention of this location more and more in his adventure. His interest in the place grew.

"All the outsiders who align with Butterfly came from the Ziggurat, including Ma Manjiang." Han Fei captured something among Jin Sheng's words. He was stringing those pieces of information into a workable clue. "There should be some straggling outsiders around the school. You can capture them to get them to provide you with more information."

The words and symbols swam on Jin Sheng's skin like blood. His expressionless face started to contort. Jin Sheng's head symbolized his memory, his body was made up of curses and blood. At that moment, the words were crawling towards his cheeks and forehead. The presence around him became colder and colder.

"I still don't have the power to stop myself from going berserk. When the curses crawl all over my body, I'll lose control. Even though this school exists because of me, I am not a valid manager." Jin Sheng gripped the cupboard door. The black words and symbols on his body splattered onto the cupboard walls like actual blood. It was only then that Han Fei noticed the inner walls of the cupboard were filled with words as well, each of them dripping with resentment and curse. "If you come across anything you can't solve at this school, you can come back to find me. I'll force myself to stay sane every midnight."

The words appeared in Jin Sheng's eyes. His small body started to tremble. Maintaining his rationality was taking a toll on him. The cupboard doors closed. At the last moment, the boy stared silently at Han Fei's face. His lips moved as if mouthing, thank you.

The cupboard doors closed. Han Fei remembered everything Jin Sheng said. He planned to compile them into a file and handed it to the police. The police were the arbitrator of law, not him.

The infirmary returned to silence. After dealing with Jin Sheng, Han Fei finally turned towards Huang Yin who was still in extreme shock and terror. Huang Yin was between the twilight zone of fainting and dreaming. His face was drained of blood and his lips were purple.

"Brother Huang, are you alright?"

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He was previously playing an Iyashikei game happily, wrapped up in the warmth of his own home. He was decorating the room with the nurse NPC who came to visit, they talked about his vision for the future. But the next second, he appeared on a hellish field. His familiar friend's legs were snapped at a curious angle, his single arm was missing and he was covered in blood. Before he could react, a human head was tossed towards him like a baseball!

To have fallen from heaven to hell had taken less than a second for Huang Yin. The monsters which could only exist in nightmares rushed towards him, not one, not two, or three, four but a whole horde of them. Honestly, Huang Yin could not explain how he managed to escape. At the time, his mind was blank and his body was acting on instinct. He had no plan other than to run!

Thankfully the front gates were close to where he was. If he was required to get to the back gates, things might have turned out differently. In a way, he had no idea whether he was lucky or not. When Han Fei held the conversation with Jin Sheng, Huang Yin was still trying to wrap his head around the whole situation. He appeared to have wandered from one nightmare to another. Looking at the decrepit room with pill bottles, blood stains and other medical contraption, he did not dare to even move.

"Brother Huang, are you alright?" With a friendly smile on his face, Han Fei reached towards Huang Yin, "I know everything that happened tonight was a bit sudden but I assure you that it was absolutely necessary." If not for Huang Yin, Han Fei would be trapped forever inside the manager mission so Han

Fei was deeply appreciative of the good doctor. "I see that you are still in a state of shock. Normally, I should give you more time to take things in but we do not have that luxury of time." There were still outsiders at Yi Ming Private Academy. Han Fei needed to capture them to shake them for information about the Ziggurat. "The killer for the human jigsaw case, the frozen body case and the case of the foretold deaths might have seen you and we need to plan for that."

Some light finally returned to Huang Yin's dull eyes and Han Fei slowly gave out a sigh. "We better leave this room first, we'll talk on the way." He picked up Huang Yin from the floor. Perhaps the warmth from the living provided some normalcy for Huang Yin as some color returned to his face.

"Is there anything you wish to ask me?" Han Fei did not know where to start so he turned the questions to Huang Yin and he'd answer any questions thrown his way.

"I..." This was the first time Huang Yin ever had the chance to speak since he was summoned to this world. A normal person would have fainted by now, Huang Yin was still conscious because this was not his first time at the rodeo. However, this time, things were a lot more terrifying than the last. There were so many questions in his mind. Huang Yin's lips opened but he did not know where to begin. He grabbed Han Fei's left arm which was not supposed to be there. He examined it and was about to say something when the infirmary door shoved open. The honest Ol' Lee rushed into the room. "Are you alright?"

Instantly, the smell of decomposition filled up the room. A mobile ghost lair that was Ol' Lee stopped before Han Fei and Huang Yin. Ol' Lee reached for Han Fei with worry and concern. He studied Han Fei and the weak Huang Yin for signs of distress. This was supposed to be a concerned look but it delivered a horrendous blow to Huang Yin's psyche. From Huang Yin's perspective, he just wanted to check on Han Fei's new friend but from Huang Yin's perspective, he saw a mountain of ghostly visage leaned towards him.

He landed on his butt. Huang Yin's pants were soaked in blood and he could feel the sticky liquid cold against his skin.

"There are still outsiders at the school. We mustn't let our guard down, we will go capture them now!" Han Fei wanted to borrow Ol' Lee's power to apprehend the rest of the outsiders. He conversed naturally with Ol' Lee like he could not see the group of ghosts draped over the security guard. Seeing this, Huang Yin panicked even more. 'Am I the only one who can see the ghosts?!' It was not surprising that Huang Yin would come to that conclusion, mainly because Han Fei's acting skill was too good. After all, the man was a master actor.

“Okay!” Ol’ Lee turned to leave the infirmary. The 2 metres tall bloody woman who stood on tiptoe swept a glance at Han Fei before turning her gaze on Huang Yin.

“Brother, there’s a ghost following behind him!” Huang Yin gripped Han Fei’s sleeves until his knuckles were white. He would give everything to escape from this nightmare. After Ol’ Lee left the room, Han Fei helped to pick Huang Yin up from the ground.

“Can, can you not see them? His body was surrounded by ghosts! There were at least 10 of them! Can you not see them?!” Huang Yin demanded agitatedly.

“Of course I can.” Han Fei shrugged, “But seeing them and pointing them out are two different things.”

“But why?!”

“It’s called being courteous.” Han Fei was about to explain further when a loud noise came from the first floor of the education block. Han Fei looked out through the infirmary window and saw Zhang Guanxing fighting with a monster that was formed from Ma Manjiang’s 4 sons. Zhang Guanxing was on the losing side but the young man appeared to have gone insane. Ignoring the wounds that appeared on his body, he threw himself into the battle.

“What exactly is Zhang Guanxing doing?” Han Fei felt something was not right. Zhang Guanxing did not appear like a reckless young man. Fighting on all 4, Ma Manjiang’s 4 sons joined their bodies together. The surface of its skin was surrounded by a thick blood scab. But most importantly, hidden among the four heads was a weakened human face. When he saw that face, blood boiled within Han Fei!

“Ma! Man! Jiang!” When he woke up from the manager mission, Ma Manjiang in the cryptic world had dissolved into a puddle. Based on Jin Sheng’s observation, the blue butterfly had drained Ma Manjiang of all his energy to escape from the school. At the time, Han Fei felt quite a pang of regret for he was not given the chance to apprehend Ma Manjiang personally. He had been conversing too deeply with Jin Sheng to realize the dead body which was melting away. It was not until he saw the four boys’ heads shielding Ma Manjiang’s face that Han Fei understood everything.

Normally, after a ghost’s resentment was fully drained, their body would not slowly dissolve, instead they would instantly disintegrate into nothingness!

Ma Manjiang left his body behind and covered his body with cuts to fool Jin Sheng. Since he was weakened by the blue butterfly, he was not a match for Jin Sheng. To prevent himself from being discovered, he came up with this solution. Abandoning the body which was formed from negative energy, Ma Manjiang used it to distract Jin Sheng, while his last shred of consciousness escaped into his sons' body. He made use of this opening to escape. This cunning bastard managed to fool Jin Sheng who was at the edge of insanity.

Unfortunately, the man was unlucky to have run into Zhang Guanxing in his attempt to escape from Yi Ming Private Academy. After he sneaked away from the education block, he encountered people whom he once injured. Han Fei died so many times in the manager mission. The bone-piercing pain returned alongside his memory and it now gushed towards his heart. Han Fei would not forget those pains any time soon. His eyes were red as he took out the red paper doll from his inventory.

“Brother Huang, do you mind waiting for me here? I’ll be right back.”

Chapter 195:

Huang Yin could sense the dangerous presence that radiated off Han Fei, honestly, he was quite afraid of his friend but compared to that, he was even more afraid of being left alone. “Brother, please, let me go with you!” When Huang Yin said that, Han Fei already blasted down the stairs. The speed stunned Huang Yin again, “Wait for me!” Huang Yin stumbled his way down the steps, chasing after Han Fei. When he reached the first floor, there was another surprise waiting for him.

In the empty field before the education block, there was a child with 4 heads whose body was ballooning. Bulging black veins pulsated on his skin. The whole school could hear the boy’s malevolent curses. Huang Yin’s feet stopped involuntarily. After that, he quickly scuttled to a dark corner to hide. His body shook tremendously. The smell of blood lingered in the school draped in darkness. Pitter patter of unknown things moved in the dark, there was not one place which was safe. He wanted to call out Han Fei’s name but he did not dare to make too loud a noise lest he attracted unnecessary attention. The man who was abandoned could only stay put and pray that Han Fei would return soon.

Bang! The window of the classroom just behind Huang Yin shattered. A giant python as dark as ink slithered past Huang Yin. The undulating creature chilled the air around it. ‘What kind of monster was that?!’

Before Huang Yin could recover, a wall of horrible stench hit him. The security, Ol' Lee rushed towards him. "Have you seen Teacher Han?"

The ghosts that lingered on Ol' Lee stretched their necks as far as they could towards Ma Manjiang's sons. They were all once victims of Ma Manjiang. They were too weak to do anything before but to attach themselves onto Ol' Lee. But now that Ma Manjiang was in his weakened state, they could not wait to take their revenge. How afraid they were before equal to how crazy and cruel they were now. They would repay Ma Manjiang's cruelty 10 times, 100 times back to the man!

The ghost faces contorted with hatred, the resentment in their eyes was palpable. Huang Yin had never seen something so horrifying in his life, he could not even start to imagine what these ghosts had gone through to collect such intense hatred. Taking steady steps back, Huang Yin's calves were shaking. He had no time to breathe at all. The horror scenarios lapped at him like waves and there was no end in sight!

Ma Manjiang's son had his escape route blocked. Once upon a time, he was the prince at this school but now he was surrounded by everyone that he once had under his feet. What goes up will eventually come down.

Ma Manjiang had been keeping many 'people' in check with his brute strength. Now that he had lost the very thing that instilled his dominance, the former victims of the tyrant rose up against him. This included Wild Hound, Zhang Guanxing. These victims could not care less about their own death. Even if they were to die, they would die bringing pain onto Ma Manjiang. The situation was looking bad for Ma Manjiang and his son. Ma Manjiang's face crawled out from his hiding place and shrieked shrilly.

Other than the victims, there were still some outsiders at the school. Some of them were hidden among the student body, others among the staff. These outsiders carried the trace of the butterfly on them to a certain degree. The Butterfly used these outsiders to slowly rule over Jin Sheng's school. Now that the Butterfly had escaped and the strongest outsider, Ma Manjiang only had his lingering spirit remaining, the other outsiders started to go out of control. Their nature was cruel and merciless. Their deepest sin was evoked by the Butterfly. They could no longer be called humans, they were pure monsters that had human appearances.

With Ma Manjiang's shrill call, all the hidden outsiders crawled out from the darkness. They stared at everything around them with gluttony and wrath.

'Just how many things are hidden at this school?' Huang Yin was instantly targeted by some of the outsiders. These mad individuals' favorite pastime was to hunt after the weak. Torturing their victims brought them the greatest happiness. Injuries bloomed on their skin in the shape of butterflies. Two outsiders hiding in the cafeteria grabbed their knives and made chase after Huang Yin. The poor man had to start running for his life again. There was nowhere safe at this school, it was filled with crazy people and ghosts!

The outsiders helped offset the burden on Ma Manjiang and his sons. The monster with the 4 heads stepped on Zhang Guanxing's neck. They kicked viciously at his stomach and the force sent the young man flying to the wall. This scene was right out from Jin Sheng's memory. The dying Zhang Guanxing dropped onto the ground, panting weakly like a heavily injured stray.

Seeing as Ma Manjiang's sons were about to leave the school, a strange dripping sound came from the hostel building. Heavy footsteps heralded the arrival of a large woman. She dragged several large black plastic bags behind her. She looked at Ma Manjiang's son with a dumb smile on her face but her eyes belied an incredible depth of hatred. The hostel manager was privy to all the horrible things that four boys had done inside the hostel but she never dared to retaliate... until now.

She unwrapped the plastic bags and the girls with broken bodies from Room 401 crawled out like zombies pushing through their fresh graves. With ghastly determination, they pounced at Ma Manjiang's sons. The girls were only Lingering Spirits, they were doomed for eternal torment but Han Fei had given them an outlet to vent their resentment.

Trailing behind the girls was a puddle of water stain. The water gradually rose against gravity to form the shape of a young woman with a ruined face.

Su Mengting!

The puddle behind her echoed with the screams of several spirits. The eyes of the girl which looked at Ma Manjiang deepened with hatred. Her death appeared to have to do with Ma Manjiang as well. Before he attempted the manager mission, Han Fei had completed 4 tales of horror at this school and now all the ghosts from those 4 tales had appeared. They were united in their hatred of Ma Manjiang!

The outsiders helped Ma Manjiang and his sons but the natives of Yi Ming Private Academy also crawled out from their hiding places. Ma Manjiang had many people fooled when he was alive and had the ghosts of the school shivering under his iron fists after death. Ma Manjiang's sons attempted to escape

but the wounds on their body increased. They were like Han Fei in the manager mission, struggling in despair but for them, beyond this despair, there was only deeper despair.

Blood rained and soon only one of the heads remained. The 3 heads of his elder brothers were shredded by the girls from Room 401.

While he tried to evade attacks from Su Mengting and the hostel manager, the female ghost who had been following Ol' Lee suddenly materialized behind him. The scabs on her body started to peel. There was a bloody necklace that peeked out around her neck. She did not harm Ma Manjiang's son but instead reached her wounded hand out towards Ma Manjiang's face. Ma Manjiang was originally shielded by his four sons' heads but now 3 of them were gone and there was no one left to protect him.

Ma Manjiang started to plead for mercy, he kept mumbling something towards the woman. While the man's attention was fully on the woman, a small and tiny red paper doll walked up towards Ma Manjiang's son. The doll had an eerie smile on its paper face. It reached out its miniature hands towards Ma Manjiang's son's wounded feet. Blood instantly soaked the paper. The paper doll chuckled as it dissolved into tiny pieces of paper and crawled into the boy's body.

Indescribable pain jolted through his body and the boy tripped and fell to the ground. He realized he was losing control of his own body!

He looked around in panic and spotted Han Fei's emotionless eyes staring at him from a barely discernible corner. Hatred grew wildly in his heart, he could not imagine a living person would somehow end up overthrowing his father's glorious empire.

Chapter 196:

Ma Bo lost control of his body and fell to the ground. Instead of bleeding blood, the wounds on his body started to pour out paper shreds. The boy was flustered. In his panic, he turned to look at his father for guidance. However, when he turned his neck around, he felt a chill coming from his chest and a cold wind that blew through the hollow of his chest. Ma Manjiang chomped on the heart that was formed from resentment and Yin energy. The boy watched helplessly as his own father ate up his heart and then dropped his body like yesterday's papers.

“Ah, ah...” His voice failed him then. The last shred of his energy was stolen away. Ma Bo was unable to resist the paper doll’s attacks anymore. Once he opened his mouth, paper would fly out. As he was swamped by paper both inside and out, Ma Bo’s eyes were filled with disbelief.

By feeding on his own son’s heart, Ma Manjiang managed to recover somewhat. However, he was still a wounded Linger Spirit. It was impossible for him to escape on his own. He wanted to latch onto the other outsiders but the outsiders had just witnessed Ma Manjiang literally had just eaten his own son to survive. Now even the outsiders became guarded around Ma Manjiang. In the end, Ma Manjiang abandoned the hope of getting help from the outsiders. Instead he turned his attention onto Huang Yin. Of everyone present, Huang Yin looked the weakest. Ma Manjiang aimed to take over Huang Yin’s soul and that way, he would be reborn in a new body.

Being chased by 2 crazed men, Huang Yin was about to lose his breath. Now to make matters worse, Ma Manjiang’s bloody face pounced at him. Huang Yin was running too fast to stop. He was practically careening into Ma Manjiang. Huang Yin would never forget that face in his life. He summoned his body to stop but his legs refused to answer.

Humanity’s deepest sin shone in Ma Manjiang’s eyes. Pieces of his son’s black heart lingered in his mouth, broken wounds popped on his face. Ma Manjiang unhinged his jaw and prepared to swallow Huang Yin’s soul whole. Horrible smell of decomposition gushed out from the mouth. Huang Yin watched as the dark maw yawned before his eyes!

Suddenly, a side hook slammed into Ma Manjiang’s face. The furious fist almost shattered the man’s cheekbones.

“Hide behind me!” Han Fei nudged Huang Yin to the side. His bloodshot eyes glared as a ghastly face slowly surfaced on his back. The power of the ghost tattoo had been activated. Han Fei launched himself at Ma Manjiang without hesitation. After being forced to commit suicide for so many times, Han Fei aimed to deliver the same amount of despair back onto Ma Manjiang.

Han Fei grabbed Ma Manjiang by his left arm. More and more spirits surrounded the scene. Layers upon layers, everyone whom Ma Manjiang had hurt arrived to deliver judgement. Chuxia, Zhang Guanxing, Jin Sheng’s class teacher, the hostel manager and the other spirits at the school. The horrible screams echoed around the school. The spirits tore out the hatred that was pierced through their hearts and jammed it back onto the person who put it there. At Yi Ming Private Academy, the ghosts were crying for vengeance.

Han Fei kept a close eye on Ma Manjiang to prevent the man from dying. At one point where the situation got real dire, Han Fei even had Xu Qin's pet feed the man some Yin energy. Han Fei felt no pity or charity towards Ma Manjiang after knowing what he had done. But the scenes that unfolded before Huang Yin almost scared the man to death. After the spirits had their go, Ma Manjiang only had his head left, just like Jin Sheng in the manager mission.

"Remember you told me that you wouldn't let me die so easily? Well, now, I extend the same promise to you." Han Fei grabbed Ma Manjiang and came to the second floor infirmary. He knew Jin Sheng was in an unstable state, but Han Fei could not wait for Jin Sheng to see this. He opened the cupboard but Jin Sheng was not inside. However, the words on the walls wiggled. They seemed to arrange themselves into tales of despair.

"Jin Sheng, I've brought a present for you." The weak Ma Manjiang struggled the best he could. He wanted to escape, he knew what would happen to him once he was delivered to Jin Sheng. After Han Fei said that, the words inside the cupboard walls started to bleed. They then emitted a strong suction power to pull Ma Manjiang's head into the cupboard. The tales of despair crawled around Ma Manjiang's head like ants. The bloody words imprinted themselves on his face. The symbols and words crawled into his mind. Ma Manjiang screamed the loudest he ever had. But no matter how badly he pleaded for mercy, nothing changed. Eventually the cupboard doors slowly closed. When it did, Han Fei received the system notification in his mind. "Notification for Player 0000! Friendliness level with Jin Sheng increases by 20!"

When the doors fully closed, Ma Manjiang's wails died away. To be honest, Han Fei still had some questions for Ma Manjiang but it shouldn't matter. Jin Sheng wouldn't let Ma Manjiang die so easily so he'd have more chances in the future. When dealing with a cunning criminal like Ma Manjiang, only by having him experience true pain that he would learn to be honest. Staring at the cupboard, Han Fei decided to take a break when he remembered Brother Huang was still downstairs. "How could I forget about my life savior? That is not the way to treat my guest."

Han Fei hurried out and once he entered the stairwell, he was greeted by a warm scenario. Ol' Lee, who was covered in ghosts, sat beside Huang Yin on the steps. The old gentleman tapped Huang Yin consolingly on his shoulders. "Young man, I can see that you carry a lot of pressure on your shoulders. And it might be hard for you to breathe at times. Perhaps you have a family to look after and you can't afford to show any signs of weakness. I understand that. An old coot like myself might not look like much now but I can empathize with your situation. There is no need to hide or feel embarrassed. We men have feelings too." Some of the ghosts on Ol' Lee's body leaned over to curl around Huang Yin's neck. The grotesque creatures poked and touched the frozen Huang Yin. They examined Huang Yin with open curiosity. "Everything will pass. Come, let it all out. Stay strong and don't let those things crush you."

“Brother Huang! Ol’ Lee!” Han Fei hurried over. He very politely nudged into the space between the two men and turned to Huang Yin, “Brother Huang, are you alright?”

Waving his arms, Huang Yin cried chokingly, “I, I, I can’t exit the game. Where am i...”

“Brother Huang, I really need to thank you this time. I will answer any question that you have.”

“I don’t have any questions, I just want to go home.” Huang Yin hugged Han Fei’s arm as he stood up unsteadily. When he saw Ol’ Lee walk over to try to help him, tears poured out from his eyes. “Brother, if you still view me as a friend, please let me go.”

Seeing the tears, Ol’ Lee took out a handkerchief covered with blood and hair from his pocket. This was a gesture of good faith but Huang Yin couldn’t stomach it anymore.

“Okay, I’ll go find you after we get offline. I promise to explain everything then.” Han Fei supported Huang Yin as they headed towards the bathroom. When no one was around, Han Fei used the Resurrection talent. “Brother Huang, please don’t tell anyone about things that happened here and remember to look after yourself.”

Chapter 197:

Blood suffused the menu, it slowly opened to the sides like a pair of gates. Huang Yin who stood facing away from Han Fei had no idea what happened before he was sent into the Gates of Hell. Usage of Resurrection exhausted Han Fei greatly, it pretty much drained him. After sending Huang Yin back, Han Fei prepared to leave the game as well. He knew there were still other tales of horror left unfinished at Yi Ming Private Academy, the completion rate of the Grade F Hidden Mission was only 4/7 but the most immediate thing Han Fei needed to do was to contact Huang Yin and communicate with him.

Han Fei exited the bathroom and realized Ol’ Lee was still there. The security guard was worried about Huang Yin. “Your friend looks like he is going through a lot. You need to show him some care.”

“I will.” Han Fei waved goodbye to Ol’ Lee. “In fact, I’ll go visit him now. See you tomorrow.” Walking towards the corner of the staircase, Han Fei opened the menu. When he chose to leave the game, he

believed he heard Ol' Lee say, "Only those who have cried in the silence of the night will have the courage to face the difficulty in the day. If there's a chance, I should befriend that young man. Perhaps I can help him somehow."

Blood froze and Han Fei's consciousness was pulled from the cryptic world. He removed the gaming helmet and felt sore all over his body. He was extremely tired. He had died more than 10 times in the manager mission and every death was intensely real. The death memories collected in Han Fei's mind. A normal person would have gone insane already, their mental institution would have collapsed.

Han Fei shrugged on a jacket and grimaced as pain blossomed all over his body. He placed the stun gun inside his pocket and left his rental. He was extremely fatigued and tired but Han Fei still decided to keep up his promise of meeting Huang Yin. This was his responsibility to his friend. As he exited his neighbourhood, he noticed some shadows moving inside a stationary van. Han Fei assumed it was the paparazzi. Han Fei ignored them and hurried towards the intelligent city where Huang Yin lived.

...

Swoosh! Pushing open the door of the gaming hub, Huang Yin with a paper white face tumbled out. His legs appeared to turn into noodles and he could barely stand up straight. His mind could not function. The moment he closed his eyes, his brain would fill with stuff of nightmare. The scenes were carved inside his head, he couldn't shake them loose no matter how hard he tried. Unable to summon any more strength, Huang Yin collapsed onto the couch. His body trembled. If there was no accident, that would be the last time he logged into Perfect Life.

Raising his finger, Huang Yin tapped lightly on the coffee table. The robot butler bustled over with Huang Yin's favorite drink. She placed it beside Huang Yin and then sat down on the couch and massaged Huang Yin's muscles to help him relax. Everything was programmed and set. The AI butler was Deep Space Tech's latest program. It could read human emotions and understand the change to human psychology. Using them, it could adapt itself perfectly to their owner's requirement and needs.

The product had more than 10 preset personalities. When upgraded, it also came with a language system, making it even more authentic in emotional expression and emotional communication. As the AI massaged his back, Huang Yin slowly calmed down. He laid his head on the butler's soft calves and sipped the drink. After a long rest, Huang Yin removed his clothes that were soaked in cold sweat and headed towards the bathroom.

The bathtub was already filled with hot water. Huang Yin eased himself into it. The butler guarded patiently beside him. Before Huang Yin even voiced his demands, she would play the right music and send him the items he needed.

As he soaked in the warm water, Huang Yin could feel the negative energy wash away and they were replaced by a sense of drowsiness. It was not until this moment that Huang Yin finally sighed in relief. He activated the voice-controlled screen inside the bathroom and pulled up Han Fei's contact information. He hesitated for a long time but in the end, failed to get the courage to call Han Fei.

Instead he went online to search for information. Suddenly, he received a private message on his account. Someone with the ID called, The Witness sent him a link and it was entitled—They had the same experience as you did.

After ensuring the link was safe and contained no virus, Huang Yin opened it. It led to a video. The video quality was blurry and dark. The location of the shot was somewhere between the intelligent city and the old city. In the video, there was a man who was holding a camera phone aimed at his own front door. He was talking to someone behind the camera. "This is the second time it has appeared, I have no idea how it found out where I live."

The other person did not answer. The man stared nervously at the door and continued anxiously, "3 am, that was the time it appeared last time. But that time it merely roamed around the corridor, as if looking for my home."

Bang! Something knocked into the door, it startled the man in the video and Huang Yin outside the video. With a paling face, the man in the video held the phone with shaking hands. He staggered away from the front door. "It seems to have found out where I live."

The sound only came once from outside the door. It had been quiet ever since. The man turned to the surveillance monitor that was beside the door. There was no one outside his room, only a round, red rubber ball.

"A rubber ball?"

The red rubber ball bounced against the door and then rolled backwards. From the corner of the video, a pair of hands reached out to pick up the ball. "This is different from what I saw yesterday! There is more than one ghost?!"

The man with the phone stood frozen beside the monitor. His eyes were fixed to the screen but nothing else happened. Eventually he let his guard down and turned his eyes away. "Have they left?" Just as the man was about to sigh in relief, a series of knocking came from the door. His heart skipped a beat. The man clamped his hand over his mouth and turned back to the monitor.

His neighbour was slamming repeatedly and urgently against his door. The man did not dare to breathe, much less utter a response.

The neighbour knocked for a long time. Seeing that there was no one home, he eventually gave up and left. But seconds later, the man's phone started to vibrate. He answered the call, it was his neighbour. "Ye, yes?"

"Quick, leave your home now! You are inside the house with ghosts! I just saw with my own eyes someone in red leading a child to enter your home!" The neighbour exclaimed anxiously. The panic seeped into the man's marrow and he looked around his home with great unease.

Huang Yin who was curled inside the bathtub stopped the video. He felt strangely uncomfortable like he was being watched. When his eyes turned to the corner of the room, he saw that it was 3.40 am.

Chapter 198:

The warm water worked miracles on Huang Yin's tensed nerves. He calmed down and recovered some of his stamina. He minimized the video window and pulled it to the side. Then he pulled up videos of comedy and cartoons instead. Watching the gags, listening to the canned laughter, he finally felt ready enough to continue with the video. He pressed play and the man in the video turned his phone around to look behind him. The fear on his face was palpable. Cold sweat beaded on his forehead. "They have entered my home?"

Picking up the glass ashtray from the table, the man swung around to take a good shot of his home. The person taking the video had been so quiet that it felt like the man was talking to himself. "Can a phone

really capture their existence?” The man carefully checked all the rooms through the lens of his phone camera. He found nothing. Huang Yin examined every corner of the video, and he too found nothing.

“In that case, why would my neighbour say those things?” The man fidgeted, “Or was that not my neighbour? He’s been colluding with them? The ghosts haven’t really entered my home but he wanted me to open the door to let them in?!” The man slowly convinced himself, “Yes, my neighbour was trying to scare me. If I really open the door, the ghosts outside will jump in!” The man rubbed his arms nervously, “Thankfully, I didn’t listen to him...”

The phone which was filming suddenly buzzed. The man had to quit filming mode. He glanced at the caller id and his expression slowly softened. “Honey? Why are you calling me at this hour? Why aren’t you in bed?”

“There are so many bugs here in the countryside, I can’t even sleep.” The woman groaned resentfully. “When can our son and I return home? Are you sure you saw a ghost in our building?”

“Do you think I will lie about something as serious as that?!” The man suddenly raised his voice, but then quickly lowered it as if worried that he might be overheard. “Just stay there for a few more days. We just need to find someone to buy this house from us and then we can move. Haven’t you and our son been meaning to move to the intelligent city?”

“Do we have the money? Stop dreaming! If you ask me, you should take a few days break and go see a doctor. Too much stress and you’ll fall sick.”

“Okay, okay. I’ll think about it.” Hearing the comforting nagging from his wife, the man’s fear slowly dissipated. He placed the ashtray on the shoe rack that was visible at the corner of the screen. “By the way, you need to hear this! The sound has returned today! And there is more than one of them!” While the man was focused on talking with his wife, something appeared from the edge of the screen. A single arm reached out from inside the shoe rack and silently reached for the ashtray. “I’m telling you, even our neighbour has been possessed! He just came over to knock on our door, saying our house is haunted. But think about it, if he has really seen a ghost, will he stay to warn us about it?” The man walked out from the shot while talking on his phone. His reflection could be seen on the floor tiles. “He wanted to trick me to open the door but of course I didn’t fall for it.”

The ashtray on the shoe rack slowly moved until it disappeared from view.

“Honey, just stay there for a few more days, I promise...” At this point, another reflection could be seen on the tiles. It was incredibly blurry like the figure had no body. The man on the phone did not notice it but Huang Yin outside the video saw clearly the blurry figure raise the ashtray and bring it down heavily on the man’s head.

The attack was relentless. Blood splattered on the tiles and the shoe rack. Then the man’s bloody face dropped right in the middle of the shot. His eyes were wide with fear. The angle froze but the video was not yet over. The man’s phone dropped to the ground. His wife’s voice kept coming from it. After a while, Huang Yin saw the arm reach out from beyond the screen again. It picked up the phone from the ground and said in the man’s voice. “It was nothing, honey. I just killed a rat. It was probably the thing behind the noises I’ve been hearing lately.”

“Then does that mean we can go back home? This place is so dirty and bug-infested.”

“If you really want to, then come back home tomorrow.”

“Really?”

“Yes, I’m sure this has been tough on you. I’ll prepare a scrumptious meal to welcome you and our son home.”

After the call ended, one after another bloody footprint appeared on the tiles. The previously closed front door eased open and then knocking came from the neighbour’s front door.

The video suddenly went black. When it returned, the image was so much darker. The video was no longer taken at the same place, instead this time it featured a very luxurious bedroom. Two fair ladies sat by the edge of a large bed. One of them had on a facial mask and the other was recommending her friend some kind of skin product. Both of them were in their pyjamas that showed off their curves. They chatted about female topics when one of them suddenly turned to the wall. The clock showed that it was 3 am. The girl’s expression changed slightly before she turned to hold the other girl’s hand.

“Thank you for coming to be my company, Ah Xing. After my husband’s disappearance, it’s quite scary to live in such a large house alone.”

“Xiao Jie, there’s no need for thanks.” Ah Xing was not a looker but she had a kind heart. She could see the distress on Liu Jie’s face so she tried for a joke. “If not for you, I wouldn’t have a chance to enjoy such a soft bed in my life.”

“If you like it, you can come over more often.” Xiao Jie hugged Ah Xing, “I’m so glad that you’re my friend.”

“We better go to bed or else these expensive skin lotions will go to waste.” Ah Xing crawled under the bed. She reached to close the light but was stopped by Xiao Jie. “Can we keep the lights on? I’m afraid of the dark.”

“Alright, you’re the boss.”

“There’s one more thing that I need to tell you, Ah Xing.” Xiao Jie turned to look at Ah Xing seriously, “I seem to have the habit of sleep-walking. If I suddenly move around with my eyes closed, you have to stop me.”

“Sleep-walking?”

“Yes, but that was what my husband told me. I haven’t got the chance to confirm it myself.”

“I promise to wake you if that happens. Don’t worry.” The two girls pulled up the cover. The bedroom lights were left open. The video suddenly dimmed. When the image returned, the lights in the lavish bedroom were already closed. The clock on the wall showed that it was 3.30 am.

A strange sound came from the video. It was hard to tell what originated it. In any case, Ah Xing, who was a light sleeper, was woken up by it. She rubbed her eyes and called Xiao Jie’s name softly but there was no reply. When she reached towards the other side of the bed, she realized Xiao Jie’s side was empty.

“Xiao Jie?” Sitting up in bed, Ah Xing noticed someone had switched off the lights. She tried the switch but the lights refused to come on. “Did the fuse burn?” Taking out her phone, Ah Xing activated the flashlight function. Ah Xing got down from bed and called Xiao Jie’s name. She followed the strange

noise out from the bedroom and came to the living room. The noise appeared to come from the kitchen. Ah Xing slowly eased the kitchen door open.

“Xiao Jie?” Xiao Jie, who wore an apron, was standing before a cutting board. Her eyes were closed but she held table knives in both hands. She chopped repeatedly against the chopping block but strangely enough, there was nothing sitting on it.

Chapter 199:

Seeing this, Ah Xing was naturally afraid. She wanted to wake Xiao Jie but didn't dare to get too close. Xiao Jie was like a different person. Even though her eyes were close, her expression was horrifying. “What is she doing?” After a few more chops, Xiao Jie slowly turned while holding the knives. Her eyes were still closed. Ah Xing kept her mouth shut as she slowly moved backwards. Before she could do anything else, Xiao Jie strode past Ah Xing and headed to the bedroom. Standing inside the dark bedroom, Xiao Jie with her eyes closed aimed at the place where Ah Xing had been sleeping and chopped with all her might!

The cleaves landed one after another, they were meant to kill. Ah Xing's legs weakened from this sight. If she was not awakened by the sound, she would be minced meat already. The knives shredded the fluffy pillows and bed sheet. Veins pulsed on Xiao Jie's skin and her expression was maddeningly crazy. Ah Xing had not seen that kind of expression on Xiao Jie before. Her impression of Xiao Jie was graceful and sometimes a bit too cowardly. But now it was like some other person was living inside Xiao Jie. Ah Xing abandoned the plan to wake Xiao Jie, she just wanted to leave. ‘If Xiao Jie has done this thing in the past, doesn't that mean she was the one who killed her husband in her sleep? But didn't she say he has gone missing? And where is his body?’

Ah Xing could not fathom the possibility that Xiao Jie, who normally wouldn't dare to hurt a fly, could dismember and hide a man's body on her own. Just as Ah Xing retreated to the door, Xiao Jie's hands that held the knives suddenly stopped. She appeared to hear something. Her body turned slightly before she stopped to face Ah Xing. Her eyes were closed but the knives in her hands nudged degree by degree until the points of the knives were accurately directed at Ah Xing. Enveloped by terror, Ah Xing retreated in shock as Xiao Jie strode emotionlessly after her prey!

The familiar face looked so strange to Ah Xing then. She picked up her pace and raced towards the front door. She wrapped her hands around the doorknob but it refused to turn. The door had been locked. Seeing Xiao Jie slowly approaching, Ah Xing finally lost her control. She screamed Xiao Jie's name shrilly. Then something even more terrifying happened. Xiao Jie who was dream-walking appeared to hear Ah

Xing's voice. Her eyelids fluttered before they flipped open altogether. Inside those pretty large eyes, there were only pulsating eyeballs and eye white. Xiao Jie appeared positively possessed!

However, Xiao Jie did not come any closer to Ah Xing, perhaps it was the latter's voice that evoked something within her. Instead, Xiao Jie started to rummage around the large home as if looking for something. Ah Xing took out her phone to call for help but realized that there was no signal. She patted on the front door but there was no answer. Now her only hope was the bungalow window. However, the window was on the other side of the living room where Xiao Jie currently roamed.

She summoned her courage to move forward. The sound of rummaging entered her ears. When she came closer, Ah Xing was shocked by what she saw. Xiao Jie who still held the knives pulled out bags of stuff wrapped in cling wrap from behind the paintings, inside the art pieces, under the sofa and so on. Xiao Jie normally was a neat and tidy housewife. Those virtues showed now as evidenced by the fact that extra care was taken to wrap up these things and cling wrap was used to keep them fresh and secure. Xiao Jie then took out new rolls of cling wrap from some hidden corner of the living room. When everything was ready, Xiao Jie turned back to Ah Xing. "We should have enough storage space now. With a little squeeze here and there, there should be enough space to fit the two of you."

Xiao Jie who was definitely not her usual self lunged at Ah Xing. The clock ticked. Ah Xing's screams slowly died away. At 3.42 am, Xiao Jie who was bathed in blood appeared in the middle of the screen. She was still holding the knives. Her body was contorted in crazy angles. It was as if there was something inside Xiao Jie who was controlling her to do these inexplicable things.

Xiao Jie who stood in the living room slowly turned her pupil-less eyes around like she was studying the room. Eventually, her eyes landed right at the video screen. It was as if she had spotted Huang Yin who was watching the video. The eyeballs pulsed viciously. She gripped the knives and started to move towards the screen!

And then, the video went black. This time, the video was halted for quite some time. When the video returned, Xiao Jie had already collapsed to the ground. Her expression showed a girl serenely asleep. But there was a trail of bloody footprints that led away from her. The footprint was facing towards the screen like someone was walking towards it.

The video ended then. Huang Yin glanced at the time at the corner of his phone, it was 3.43 am. It matched the time which was inside the video.

“Is this some kind of prank?” Huang Yin closed the video and intended to pm the user who sent him the link but when he checked the id, he realized the id had been turned into a string of unrecognizable code. When he clicked on it, the system said that the user did not exist. “That’s impossible! I remember the user’s name was the witness.” Huang Yin’s fear slowly returned. He quickly deleted the video and cleared his files. Huang Yin stepped out from the bath. The temperature regulation unit appeared to have broken. He felt strangely cold that night. Wiping away the water, Huang Yin grabbed a robe and exited the bathroom. He scanned the dark room and felt suffocated by it.

After turning on all the lights, Huang Yin still felt quite uncomfortable. Fatigue and drowsiness claimed him. His brain felt heavy but he could not sleep. Something niggled at his mind. ‘The thing wouldn’t have really come out from the video, would it?’ Huang Yin tossed and turned on his king-sized bed. He eventually rolled to his bedside table and pulled open the drawer. He shook out 2 sleeping pills. ‘I must stop scaring myself. That was just a prank, it has to be.’

Tossing back the pills, Huang Yin went back to bed. The pills worked to pull him under but his mind was active with images of horrible monsters. Underneath it all, he believed he could hear a series of hurried footsteps. ‘Why is there the sound of footsteps?’

Huang Yin’s eyes flew open and when he did, an indescribable fear gripped him. The lights inside the bedroom had been switched off. There was a figure moving around his living room before it entered the kitchen. As time moved towards 3.44 am, the figure exited the kitchen. Based on the silhouette, it was a woman and she was holding something in her hands.

Chapter 200:

Huang Yin laid in bed and tiredness claimed his body so much that he found it too difficult to even move a muscle. The temperature around him dropped and he was surrounded by darkness. It was at that moment that a figure strode out from the kitchen.

The scene that unfolded before Huang Yin was similar to the last scene from the video. It was as if the ghost had really gotten out from the video to come after Huang Yin. Terror gripped his mind and dominated each of his nerves. The fear was no different from the one he felt inside the game but Huang Yin knew that he was in real life and he had no option to quit it so to speak.

Huang Yin was so tired that he could barely find the strength to keep his eyelids open. He knew he had to run away to safety but his limbs refused to move. It felt like his brain was no longer under his control.

It kept flashing him the most despairing and horrifying images. It fed him an impression, one that was not good for his well-being.

'It is not safe to stay inside the house!' The echoing footsteps shot Huang Yin's body with adrenaline. The images from the video he just watched filled up his mind. In the first video, the neighbour knocked on the man's door to warn him but the man did not believe his neighbour. The ghost was already inside his home. The ghost hid in some secluded corner of the house and could appear at any moment.

Fear and pressure amounted as the figure approached, the images from the second video infiltrated Huang Yin's mind. Ah Xing was woken up by some strange sounds. She opened her eyes blurrily and saw her best friend practicing chopping with knives inside the kitchen. When she realized the need to escape, she was already trapped inside the house. The former place of comfort became her prison.

If the ghosts had really exited from the video, then they might be watching him from some corner of his house. Indescribable fear swamped Huang Yin's mind. Reality overlapped with fiction. Huang Yin was in a very bad state. His nerve was stretched taut like a twine pulled to its maximum elasticity. One more pull and it would snap.

Huang Yin tried his best to crawl up from the bed. There was a voice within him that urged him to leave. For some reason, he was certain that the longer he stayed, the more painful his death would be. Huang Yin gripped the art piece beside his bed for support to pull himself up. The expensive art décor felt so much heavier like usual, like it was stuffed with human meat pieces.

At that moment, everything inside the room felt so unfamiliar to Huang Yin. 'This place is no longer safe, I cannot stay here any longer.'

Huang Yin croaked out an order but the voice-activated lights did not respond. Huang Yin was like a man drowning in a sea of darkness. His voice slowly abandoned him and he felt extra weight pulling down on his body. The temperature still continued to fall, reaching the freezing point. With nudging footsteps, Huang Yin saw the figure was getting close to him in the dark. She was holding something that she had just retrieved from his kitchen.

Leave! Run! Some bodily instinct within him kicked in. Huang Yin grabbed the art piece and threw it at the moving figure in the dark. Then he rolled out from bed and half-crawled his way through the living room and towards the front door.

The figure was still approaching him from behind when Huang Yin's hand pressed on the latest anti-theft door. The door had 3 layers of encrypted defence, an outsider would not be able to open it. After Huang Yin's fingerprint was identified, he had to key in the password. By then, the shadowy figure was only several steps behind him.

Working against trembling fingers and overwhelming fear, Huang Yin had to use everything he had just to make sure the password was correct. He closed his hands around the handle and pushed outwards!

However, just as the door opened a small gap, a gloved hand reached into the room. The hand held the door tightly to prevent Huang Yin from closing it. With a powerful kick, the weakened Huang Yin was knocked to the side. The triple-layer encrypted front door swung open further. A man in black clothes, wearing black gloves and carrying a black box entered the room. There was some kind of paint on his face. It blurred his features enough that it effectively neutralized the facial recognition security.

"Still have one more minute." From the black box came a small unknown machine which was operating. On its small screen, it showed the control panel to all the AI systems in Huang Yin's home. The man in black used this to infiltrate into housing systems. This was not his first time doing something like this. A few choice adjustments later, he peeled off the clothes from Huang Yin and the AI butler. Then he modelled the butler in such a way that Huang Yin was caught in a compromising position with her. Finally he controlled the butler to strangle Huang Yin. It would look like self-defence in her part. "This is how you will die. Your name will be ruined and your family will be forever in shame because of you."

The slender hands tightened. Huang Yin's eyes rolled upwards. The butler was ultimately a robot, she was much stronger than a normal human despite her appearance. Furthermore, Huang Yin was already too tired to put up much of a fight. He could feel the air cutting off. Huang Yin's face turned purple. He struggled weaker and weaker. "Your soul will be led by the Butterfly to the shore. Be proud because this is not death but a release."

The hands continued to press. Huang Yin had stopped the resistance. Light diffused from his eyes, he could see Death arriving for him. Right at that moment, hurried footsteps came from the previously quiet corridor!

This sudden appearance shattered the man's entire plan. He turned back to look at the front door which was left half a palm wide open. Huang Yin's home had 3 layer lock, once it was closed, one would have to provide fingerprint, password and voice recognition to open it again. In other words, if the man in black closed the door now, then he would be locked inside the house and would not be able to leave in the foreseeable future.

He only had 2 seconds of hesitation before the unlocked door was pulled open. A young man in normal attire arrived with labored breath. His bloodshot eyes glanced into the room. Once the new arrival saw what was inside the room, the hand that gripped the door pulsed with veins. Without any hesitation, he leaped into a swiping kick aimed at the man in black's head!

The man who was already half-crouching evaded at the last moment. The pretty AI butler though was not that lucky. Her body slammed heavily into the wall and her shoulder became crooked from impact. Huang Yin was pulled back somewhat to the present from the loud boom. He forced his eye to open. He saw the young man framed at his front door. Just as Death was arriving, this young man held Death at bay!

"Han Fei..." His lips opened but he could barely make a sound. Huang Yin's neck was bruised and bleeding. He tried to grab at something but nothing took hold.

The man in black instantly had his plan gone up in flames. His painted face shone with viciousness. Ignoring Han Fei, he pulled out a non-metallic knife to stab Huang Yin. It was clear that the man in black had been given some kind of instruction and in his purview, Huang Yin was much more important than Han Fei.