

Iyashikei 701

Chapter 701: Preparation

701 Preparation

“A figurine?” Han Fei knelt beside the bed to observe it. The figurine had a human face but a scaly body. The scales on its back rippled like waves.

“Is this the figurine of the Lake God mentioned by the old lady? But isn’t this supposed to be at the bottom of the lake with the orphan?” The lifeguard was curious. He moved forward but was stopped by Han Fei.

“Don’t move.” Han Fei removed a leg from the chair and knocked it against the figurine. Murky water flowed out of the figurine about one meter tall. A black bug with eight slender legs crawled out of the open mouth. It looked like a water spider but was much larger in size. Its stomach also had the pattern of a human face. It looked like a drowned victim screaming.

“Rest in Peace.” Han Fei sliced the bug into halves. Its eight legs twitched before the creature dissolved into rotting water. “The bigger the sin, the sharper my knife. This bug might look small, but it has killed at least two people already.” Han Fei’s method of discerning an object’s danger level was very simple. He would cut it and look at how deep the cut was. The lifeguard retreated in fear. If Han Fei didn’t stop him, the black bug would have crawled into his sleeves already. The cat meowed as it jumped out of Han Fei’s backpack and knelt beside the figurine. Its paw grabbed the figurine’s feet. The nine patterns on its body seemed to join with the figurine. Black water oozed out of the figurine to be absorbed by the tattoo.

About 10 seconds later, black water spiders fell out of the figurine’s nose and mouth. Their bodies were shrunk, and their eight legs curled together. The patterns on their stomachs faded away like they had been dried. Seeing the dead water spiders, Yan Yue and the lifeguard shivered. They didn’t imagine such a large group of poisonous bugs would hide inside the small figurine.

“Big Sin and Nine Lives are hiding inside my ghost tattoo. Nine Lives is prowling about in the form of a kitten. However, Big Sin is still trapped. However, it shall be able to come out after it absorbs enough energy.” Han Fei could sense the calling in the ghost tattoo getting strong. Han Fei picked up the figurine. It was only one meter tall, but it was quite heavy.

“Han Fei, we better don’t touch the things here just in case we’re sucked into them.” The lifeguard reminded him. “When I was still on my post, we heard many stories happening on the water. If you want to live, you better don’t mind these businesses.”

“Even if we don’t mind these businesses, they will come to disturb us.” Han Fei glanced out the half-open window. Outside the window was the lake. A small piece of the bloody fish scale was stuck on the windowsill. “Has the boss here turned into a fish monster? Or the fish monster turned into the boss?”

Han Fei rummaged the room and found a diary inside a hidden compartment under the study table. The front half recorded evidence of the vacation town boss swindling money and doing half-hearted projects, while the latter half contained some strange entries.

“1st November. The greedy and cowardly CEO Jia has changed. He never cared about the nearby citizens, but today, he came to find me. He wanted me to gather everyone to worship the Lake God. Is it raining blood today?”

“2nd November. It looks like I was too prejudiced against the city people. Even though CEO Jia is normally quite stingy, he is quite reliable at crucial moments. The ceremony this time is much larger than before. We’ll definitely have a good year ahead.”

“10th November. CEO Jia is being so generous, so what if I have to wait for a few more days? If he is willing to pay me money, it’s not impossible for me to ruin those accounts.”

“14th November. Something is wrong! He is not worshipping the Lake God. He is encasing his child’s carcass inside the figurine. What is that madman doing?”

“15th November. Who is CEO Jia? Why would his wife say that he had died a long time ago? Why do I keep having this nightmare that CEO Jia has morphed into a big fish and drags me underwater?”

“16th November. Are those dreams real? Why are there scales on my arms?”

“18th November. The worship ceremony is tomorrow. It feels like everyone has gone insane! Can’t they notice the strange events around town?”

“19th November. It’s all over! The whole boat of people died in the lake. Even the Lake God figurine left behind by our ancestors has sunk into the lake. The land deity is responsible for penance, and the water deity is responsible for stopping the tragedy. Tragedy will spread this time!

“The only solution now is to find another orphan to send the figurine submerged inside the water well at the old residence to the central island of the lake and complete the ritual. But where can I find a willing orphan? Everyone nearby knows about this, and no one dares to go there at night anymore. This is all because of greed. I’ve failed my ancestors!”

“22nd November. CEO Jia’s body has been found. The police said the man planned to kill the entire village to revive his child. He poisoned the ceremony. That would explain the nightmares I was having those few days.”

“25th November. Why? Why? Things have ended so many days already. Why am I still having that dream? More scales grow on my body, and the nightmare is becoming real!”

“I can’t fall asleep, or I’ll wake up at the bottom of the lake!”

“1st December. I saw it! They are all at the bottom of the lake. There is no palace of the Lake God but a massive watery grave.”

“2nd December. I need to pull off all these scales. It’s so painful! Who can save me? Who can save us?”

“4th December. We need to deliver the figurine! It is on the central island!”

The rest of the entry was written in incoherent symbols. It was like the writer had forgotten how to write by this point. “It looks like the only solution is to ascend the island at midnight and repeat the worship ceremony.” Han Fei kept the diary inside his backpack. He had the lifeguard carry the figurine. The three searched through the boat rental center but they found no one.

“Come on. Let’s inspect the other places.” The three just left the center when they heard the taxi starting. The vehicle rushed through the darkness to hit something.

“Did Lee Guo Er run into danger?” Han Fei immediately rushed toward the taxi. The black taxi stopped beside the spa hotel. The front of the taxi was dented, and fish scales stuck to it.

“Are you alright?” Han Fei glanced inside the car and realized his worry was unfounded. When Lee Guo Er spotted the monster, she didn’t run away but used the car to run into the creature.

“After you left, I felt there was something outside the car. There was water on the windscreen like it was raining.”

“Did you see the monster?”

“It looks like a human.” Lee Guo Er said calmly. “His clothes are all wet like he just came out of the water. He kept trying to get into the car. He even mimicked your voices.” Someone else would be frightened to death, but Lee Guo Er handled it perfectly.

“Where did the body land?”

“In the hotel.”

Han Fei took out Rest in Peace and headed to the spa hotel. He pushed open the rusted gate, and melodious music drifted out. There was someone playing classical music on the third floor of the hotel. The unknown song had a hypnotic effect. Han Fei looked around. The yard was grown with flowers. The owner must have used some kind of special fertilizer because all the plants looked vibrant. As he walked forward, the classical music changed. It was mixed with the sound of descaling and meat-sawing.

The monster that was knocked into the hotel was gone. Han Fei only saw the rippling on the pond in the yard.

“Is this pond connected to the lake? It looks quite deep.” The lifeguard was very scared. He was a good swimmer, but he was afraid of all the bodies of water there.

“We shan’t separate when we explore the hotel.” Han Fei led them through the yard and entered the hotel. The lanterns above the door glowed weakly. The hotel had a classical design style. For some reason, it looked like a classical coffin house.

“Is anyone here?” The candles at the counter were lit. A yellow calendar hung on the wall. A small altar was built at the corner of the long corridor, but the figurine inside was missing.

“The date for today is marked out on the calendar. Normally speaking, today is the first day of fishing. After worshipping the Lake God, everyone will go out to fish. Tonight is a celebratory night.” The lifeguard took down the calendar. He was quite familiar with these fishing villages’ culture.

“I don’t think any living humans will be celebrating tonight, but perhaps the dead will.” Han Fei just said that when coughing came from the second floor. A door slowly opened. It creaked, and a faint fishy smell flowed down from upstairs. The water dripped. The classical music suddenly stopped. Everyone stared at the staircase.

A strange sound came from the wooden staircase. Someone was coming down. However, it didn’t sound like footsteps but more like a fish slithering down the steps.

The sound came closer, and Han Fei’s heart rose. As he was about to pull on the red strings, a fully-covered old man walked out of the shadow.

“Are you here to stay the night?” The old man was similar to the old lady from the seafood restaurant. His body was all covered except for his eyes.

“Sir, why are you wearing so many layers? The weather is not that cold.” Han Fei stared at the old man’s legs. The old man wore a pair of loose pants that covered his legs. However, he would leave behind a trail of water whenever he passed.

“It’s my old age. I get the cold easily.” The old man moved behind the counter. “It costs 50 to stay here per night. This is the map of the hotel. You can pick any room you want other than the rooms near the lake. After you pick your room, stay in it until dawn.”

After the old man walked behind the counter and was thus cornered, Han Fei's eyes changed. He had gained all the info he needed. He didn't want to waste any more time. "Sir, let's be frank."

Han Fei leaped into the counter to block the old man's only exit.

"What do you mean?"

The brilliant light shone before the old man. Han Fei stared at the old man's face. "Remove your headscarf. I'm here to help you solve your problem. I hope you can cooperate with me." The old man's arms inside his sleeves trembled. He could hear the determination in Han Fei's words. If he didn't cooperate, he would die.

After some hesitation, the old man sighed and removed his headscarf. Pieces of fish scales fell to the ground. The old man revealed his ghastly face. He had eaten much fish in his life, but he didn't expect one day he'd have a fish face.

"I was afraid of scaring you..."

"Is everyone here like you?" Han Fei was already expecting this, so he wasn't that shocked.

"I don't know." The old man shook his head. "We're cursed by the Lake God. This is our fault. We deserve to be punished."

"You did worship the Lake God in the past. But you worshipped something else near the end. That thing is not a God. It is a monster who feeds on humans." Han Fei's words spooked the old man. "My hands can touch souls. When you walked past, I checked your soul. Despite your appearance, you still have a human soul. I can save you and everyone else, but you need to tell me everything that has happened here."

The old man stared at the knife Han Fei held. It didn't seem like he had a choice.

The old man's name was Guan Miao. He was the village leader and CEO Jia's partner. By now, almost 80 percent of the village was missing. He lived in intense guilt. He would always dream that he was under the lake where the endless villagers were waiting.

In the past, his physique was normal. However, after having that dream, his body started to grow scales. It was like the dream was affecting real life. Guan Miao helped Han Fei confirm the content of the diary. To destroy the ritual, the only way was to get on the island because the real ritual was held on the island.

Other than that, Guan Miao revealed another piece of info for Han Fei. There was a real Lake God living in the lake.

"Han Fei, you better don't trust them so easily." The lifeguard persuaded Han Fei. He knew how dangerous it was to get on the island at this moment.

"I understand we need a thorough plan, but we're short on time." Han Fei used Soul-depth Touch and ensured that the old man wasn't lying. He asked Guan Miao to gather all the 'sane' villagers so that they could prepare to enter the Sea of Brain.

Chapter 702: Han Fei's Ritual

702 Han Fei's Ritual

"Is this all the surviving villagers in this town?" Han Fei looked at the nine elders gathered at the spa hotel and frowned deeply. He thought he could have some young blood to rely on, but it appeared like that was a dashed hope. Han Fei used Soul-Depth Touch to shake the elders' hands. All the elders were troubled by nightmares. Their souls were filled with worry, regret, and fear of the curse.

"They aren't lying." Han Fei saw the elders' real thoughts. They were not Dream's allies but poor victims. If Dream planned to use endless people's lives to complete its ritual, these elders were simply too old for its consideration.

"Are you really willing to risk your life to help us?" Guan Miao was the oldest there. He knew how scary the thing in the lake was. He knew getting to the island was a death trip.

“The city has changed too much. The sun might not come up again. The monsters in the lake will only get scarier.” Han Fei returned the old man his headscarf. “I know all of you are victims too, so I hope you can help me complete the ritual and save the other villagers. You should have friends and families among them too.”

“But we need an orphan and figurine to complete the ritual. There are many things to prepare too.” The old lady from the seafood restaurant was there too. She was not a bad person, but she was losing her mind. If she continued to be tormented by the nightmare, she’d one day jump into the lake to join her family.

“There is a figurine under the rental center boss’ bed, and I am an orphan. We have already satisfied the main conditions.” Han Fei was calm. He had made his decision. The elders looked at each other. They were the village’s oldest generation. They had participated in the ritual many times.

“Okay. Since you’re willing to help us, we’ll do our best to help you too.” Guan Miao communicated with the old lady from the seafood restaurant and then waved at Han Fei. “Come with me.” They walked past the spa hotel to a place not open to visitors. There was a very old ancestral hall there.

“I’ll help you invoke the Lake God.” Guan Miao didn’t look like a human anymore, but his soul still followed with his ancestor’s blood. “Light the incense and bring out the three sacrifices!”

After removing their headscarf, Guan Miao and the other elders knelt down to pray. Then, they poured the incense ash into the strange figurine of the Lake God. The village was about to die off, and the elders could barely look after themselves. Han Fei’s appearance gave them some hope, so after some quick discussion, they decided to help Han Fei. Everything was simple. After worshipping the ancestors, the elders worked together to haul out the figurine of the Lake God. Each of them held something for the ritual and sang some strange song. The elders moved the figurine from the ancestral hall to the boat rental center. They placed the figurine on a special wooden boat. The front of the boat was carved to resemble a fish head. The back was a fishtail, and the body was covered with blessings.

“Are we using this boat?”

“Wait a minute. We still have something to give you.” Guan Miao returned to the hotel and removed the lanterns from the door. “If the boat refuses to move, hang this lantern. The water ghosts in the lake will part for you when they see this ancestral lantern.”

Other than the lantern, the other elders also went home to grab some mementos. There were copper coins, children's toys, clothes, and so on. The old lady from the restaurant gave Han Fei an album. It contained the pictures of visitors and their catches as well as her family pictures. "I have a lot of children, but they all died in the lake either due to greed, or they were trying to save others. If you run into them, show them the pictures, and maybe they'll remember me."

After everything was ready, Han Fei, Guan Miao, and the lifeguard got on the boat. "The boat must seat four people. If there's an empty seat, the water ghost will take it." Guan Miao wanted to get Lee Guo Er onto the boat, but Han Fei chose Yan Yue. "She's still a child. It's too dangerous."

"It's fine." Han Fei was cautious about Yan Yue's mother. Until now, he had no idea what her power was. Han Fei didn't feel good leaving her by the shore. The four rowed the paddles and moved towards the island at the center of the lake.

"Are we being too reckless?" The lifeguard didn't expect things to go like this. One hour ago, he was in the neighborhood, but now he was going to meet water ghosts and monsters. "If we run into danger on the lake, we will have nowhere to run!"

"What's the point of saying that now?" Han Fei sat at the front of the boat and looked at the dark lake water calmly. When Huang Yin first brought the skill books to the cryptic world, Han Fei had learned many skills like lock-picking, rock-climbing, diving, and so on. As his memory recovered, so did these skills.

The light of the vacation town faded away. Only the sound of water remained. The boat slowly entered the giant lake. Han Fei took a deep breath. He was quite good in the water but when he was out there in the dark lake, negative emotions grabbed at his heart. The boat swayed with the waves. His body felt like sinking.

Not only Han Fei but the lifeguard also felt the pull. He lowered his head and didn't dare to look at the lake. When he was too afraid, he would glance at Han Fei. On the boat, Han Fei was a stabilizing presence. He was their compass.

The paddles created ripples. The vacation town disappeared down the distance. The island was still nowhere to be seen. They rowed for more than 20 minutes. The vacation town had fully disappeared. Other than water, there was only endless darkness.

“Leader Guan, how long more will it take?” The lifeguard’s hands that held the paddle were sweaty.

“We should be there soon.” Guan Miao said uncertainly. “Normally, we’ll reach there in less than thirty minutes.”

“Less than 30 minutes?” The lifeguard continued to row, but Han Fei suddenly stopped. The cat in his backpack growled too.

“Did you see something?” Yan Yue’s mother felt uneasy. Yan Yue’s face was white. She held the wound on her stomach, and she broke out in cold sweat.

“Prepare the lantern. We’ve been moving around in circles for a while already. There’s something under the boat.” Han Fei’s voice was soft, but his words scared the other three.

“Okay.” Guan Miao reached forward and hung the lantern at the head of the boat. The light flickered like it could go out at any moment.

“It does feel easier to row now.” The lifeguard was shocked. He glanced at the water lit up by the lantern. Several shadows scattered away from the light. They looked like big fishes.

“Don’t look.” Yan Yue’s mother controlled her daughter’s body and forced her to look down. “This lake is called Sea of Brain. Stare at it long enough, and you’d be sucked into it.”

“Okay.” The lifeguard was about to pull his gaze back when his paddle hit something hard.

Initially, he thought it was a reef, but why would there be a reef inside a lake? He glanced towards it subconsciously. The lifeguard saw a ball of black water weeds. They swayed in the water.

“But water weeds shouldn’t be so hard.” The paddle hung in mid-air. The lifeguard saw the weeds float towards him rapidly. He wanted to use the paddle to push the weeds away, but when the paddle parted the weeds, he saw the bloated eyes under the weeds.

“A human head!” The shock caused the lifeguard to knock Yan Yue. The wooden boat trembled.

“Don’t panic!” Han Fei tried his best to keep the boat balanced.

“In the water! There’s a human head inside the water! It’s not even dead!” The lifeguard knew that dead bodies would float horizontally and not stand vertically in the water. Han Fei pulled on the red strings. When his hand was covered in curses, he reached for the thing in the water.

“Don’t touch the water. You’re going to be pulled by them!” Guan Miao was shocked. He quickly stopped Han Fei. He took out a copper coin from his pocket, mumbled some local language, and tossed it at the human head. “Even money is useful at times like this. We better go.”

“People bully the kind. We can’t just let them bully us like this.” Han Fei saw the receding curses on his hand. “We can kill one to make an example. We’ll remove the lantern and hang a cursed human head instead.”

“We’re going to worship the Lake God, and it requires sincerity. We’re praying for the Lake God to help us resolve the tragedy, not to threaten him.” Guan Miao was shocked. The young man seemed to have misunderstood the ritual.

“You’ve prayed so sincerely since the tragedy, but did he hear you?” Han Fei glanced at the fish scales around Guan Miao’s neck. “I will respect him, but he shan’t push it.”

Chapter 703: Dream's Altar

703 Dream's Altar

The Lake God Worshipping ritual wasn’t wrong. The problem was the people doing the ritual. Guan Miao glanced at Han Fei and didn’t continue this conversation lest he said something even more blasphemous. After the copper coin fell into the water, the wooden boat moved faster. The water ghosts appeared to have accepted the toll.

The water crashed against the boat. The water seemed to carry a certain lulling rhythm. The closer they went to the center, the quieter it became. They seemed to enter a dimension where there was only an endless lake and darkness.

It was hard to tell the direction. The people on the boat felt the changes too. They were sitting on the boat, but they felt like they were sinking. It was like they were trapped in a dream. Their consciousness could feel the cold water overwhelming their bodies and their breathing becoming more difficult.

“Don’t fall asleep!” Han Fei suddenly shouted. He injected his three mates with Xu Qin’s curses so that the pain would keep them awake. “The curse will not hurt you. It’ll only prevent you from being carried into the dream.” Han Fei was very effective. Even though this method was painful, it was efficient.

Yan Yue and the lifeguard winced in pain when they were cursed. However, when Guan Miao came into contact with Xu Qin’s curse, he felt a great unease. Blood oozed out of his scarf. Scabs that looked like scales fell. The scariest thing was black worms started to crawl out of Guan Miao’s wounds. The worms were similar to the ones that crawled out of the black cocoons. They were the complete opposite of the Butterfly. They gathered the world’s ugliness. The lifeguard wanted to move away from Guan Miao, but the boat was only so big. He curled up his body to avoid the worms.

“Uncle, are those parasites? Don’t you normally cook the water you drink?” The lifeguard finally asked.

“I have no idea when these things entered my body.” Guan Miao shook his head. He removed his bloody scarf and revealed his scary face. “I only remember having those strange dreams, and my body changed.”

“You’ll grow scales once you have a dream that you’ve been changed into a fish? Can dream really affect reality?”

The lifeguard was shocked after he examined the elders’ bodies. He thought dreams could only affect people mentally. He had no idea dreams could affect people’s physique.

“Endless nightmares will affect a person’s mind, but the real reason the bodies mutated is the cocoons.” Han Fei knew a bit about Dream. “Dream has many different kinds of cocoons. They will breed different kinds of worms, and those worms might be morphed from humans.” Han Fei remembered the human cocoons made by Butterfly. They were worms made from special human souls. They were inserted into people’s bodies so that they could be reborn.

The paddles caused ripples in the water. The boat sailed for another 20 minutes, but the island was still nowhere to be seen. The lifeguard and Yan Yue's mother were anxious. The old man said they'd be there in less than 30 minutes, but they had rowed for more than 30 minutes already.

"Is it possible that we've been lied to?" Yan Yue's mother stared at Guan Miao. She opened her mouth, and an adult woman's face appeared down her throat. She didn't care if Han Fei completed the ritual or not. She only cared about her daughter's safety, and that was how Han Fei could control her.

"We should be there soon." Guan Miao said uncertainly. He took a compass out of his shirt. He twirled the needle, but the needle wouldn't stop moving. "What is happening?" Guan Miao picked up the flashlight in the boat, tied it to a rope, and lowered it underwater. The light chased away the darkness so they could see what was under the boat. "What is that?!"

Right underneath the wooden boat was a giant shadow. It had been following the boat.

"It's so big!" The shadow was over 6 meters long, twice as large as the boat.

"A water monster?" The lifeguard had never seen such a large fish. Plus, the thing didn't look like a fish!

Everyone on the boat panicked. Guan Miao's body froze. He didn't know if he should pull back the flashlight or not. The thing under the boat had noticed its light. The water became more rapid. The boat bumped. It could capsize at any moment.

"Quick. Turn off the light!" The shadow was surfacing. Guan Miao heard Han Fei's voice and quickly pulled back the rope and switched off the flashlight. The surrounding became dark again, except for the weak light at the head of the boat.

"The water monster is following the light of the lantern. I think I know why the lantern can stop the water ghosts." The lifeguard said, "The water monster is lured by light and moved to swim under the boat. The water ghosts are afraid of it, so they don't dare to come near. They are not giving your ancestors face."

Guan Miao had lived by the lake his whole life, and this was his first time seeing the giant underwater creature. He wiped away his cold sweat. "That might not be true. The culture of using the lantern to

guide the way has been in the ritual since my ancestor's time. Perhaps the water creature is my ancestors' friend."

"Shush." Han Fei also saw the shadow underwater. His eyesight was better than most. He used the flashlight and saw the silhouette of the water monster. The water surface was rocky. Han Fei stood at the head of the boat and carefully observed the changing water pattern. His expression darkened. Then he shouted, "Grab onto the boat!" Just as Han Fei said that a giant force bumped into the bottom of the boat and the boat almost turned!

"Row forward! To the island!" They had been rowing for half an hour already. It was too late to turn back now. Before the boat stabilized, Han Fei grabbed the paddles and started to row. His over 30 stamina exploded. The collision was a signal. The darkness was shattered. The pools of black weeds rapidly retreated.

"Quick!" The four on the boat didn't dare to delay. They rowed as fast as they could. The giant shadow didn't plan to let them go. The collision earlier was just a test. Indescribable anxiety assaulted the four. The only thing they could do now was to protect the small boat. If they fell into the water, the end would be close.

The first to react was Yan Yue's mother. She knew her daughter didn't know how to swim, so if she fell into the water, she would die. To prevent that, she reached down her throat to pull out a bloody meat sac. "This is a lump of rotten meat with Dream's presence. They should like it."

The meat sac wasn't big. Its surface was like an orange, with white and brown patterns. It pounded. Yan Yue's mother swung and tossed the thing far away. The rotten meat sac oozed out black blood droplets. Just as it was about to fall into the water, a giant wave crashed. A titanic black shadow leaped out of the water, opened its maw, and consumed the meat sac.

"O my God!" The water drenched the lifeguard. He looked at the spot a few meters away from him. The image earlier was branded in his heart.

"Quick! Keep on rowing!" Yan Yue's mother spat out blood. She grabbed the rope and tied Yan Yue to the boat. "The monster in the lake is very sensitive to Dream's presence. They have all been affected by the ritual. Did Dream prepare a non-human vessel for itself?"

Sea of Brain was the city's largest lake. The center of the lake was very deep, and it was connected to the underground river. Apparently, the underground water system could reach every part of the city. If the Sea of Brain was the city's brain, then the underground river system was like the nerve vessels. There had to be a reason why Brain chose this place to conduct the ritual.

The monsters underwater were distracted by the meat sac. Han Fei's group used this opportunity to row forward. Finally, a small island appeared. The island was barely visible in the dark. Hope was before them. The four rowed with all their might. As they got close to the island, the surroundings sunk into silence again. The water was filled with danger, but the lake surface was very calm.

"Did you hear children crying?" Guan Miao suddenly raised his head. His eyes had changed. They bulged like fish eyes.

"I do..." The lifeguard perked his ears. On the left side of the island was a capsized boat. The back of the boat was strung with a bamboo basket. It was stuffed with old clothes. The baby crying came from that basket.

"You people used babies as live sacrifices to the Lake God?" Han Fei glanced at Guan Miao.

"Of course not!" Guan Miao shook his head. "We only use animals and..."

"And what?"

"No matter what, we won't sacrifice babies. That's too heartless." Guan Miao lowered his head to avoid Han Fei's gaze.

"Then, we have no need to save the baby. Who would bring a baby to go fishing? The bamboo basket is carrying something else." Han Fei was not heartless. He was merely extremely rational.

"Is it something else pretending to be a baby? But it sounds so real." The lifeguard was a good person, or else he wouldn't choose this profession.

“Listen to me!” Han Fei was the leader. He rowed towards the island without hesitation. As they moved past the capsized boat, the old clothes suddenly fell away. An ugly and scaleless monster fish leaped out of the basket and into the water.

“That fish can make a baby’s sound?!” The lifeguard sucked in a cold breath. He was about to say something when the capsized boat was turned over. The boat cabin was covered in teeth marks and blood. A lot of black stuff was crawling under the boat. If they had gotten closer earlier, they would have been engulfed by those black worms.

“What is wrong with this world?” This world was like a person’s personal apocalypse. There were endless monsters, and nowhere was safe.

After avoiding the capsized ship, Han Fei finally reached the island. With Guan Miao’s guidance, they tied the boat to the simple port, and the four of them got on land. “Don’t forget the stuff on the boat. Bring them with you!”

With solid ground under his feet, Han Fei felt better. He hugged the figurine and looked around. The island was very small. Other than various strange stones and trees, the most eye-grabbing was a three-story stone house.

“Put the Lake God figurine inside the altar, and the latter half of the ritual will be completed.” Guan Miao’s voice was filled with hope. He didn’t expect they’d get on the island. In his excitement, he didn’t notice his voice had changed. He sounded like he was gurgling underwater.

Han Fei carried the figurine and followed the path. He could feel something calling him. This was Dream’s resurrection ritual, but he felt pain in his heart like he was the one who was about to be sacrificed and tortured!

The closer he was to the stone house, the stronger the feeling. However, he wasn’t that worried. With Xu Qin and Rest in Peace, he could deal with most ghosts.

Soon, the four reached the stone house. The house was surrounded by locust trees, but most of them were wilted. Only a few closest to the house were still vibrant.

“You can enter after opening the door. You need to finish the rest of the ritual yourself.” Guan Miao gripped his hands nervously.

“I have to do this alone?”

“Yes. Normally, only the orphan can get on the island. The others will wait in the boat. After the orphan returns, they will return together.” Guan Miao explained.

“Is that so?” Han Fei pulled Guan Miao along. “All of you are coming with me.”

The stone door was pushed open, and they were hit by a horrible smell. The stone house had no floor. It was hollowed down, and it had a very deep well. There was something swimming under the murky water.

“The wooden ladder is on the left. The altar is at the top of the stone house. It’s used to protect the whole lake.” The old man pointed at the third floor.

Everyone followed his finger. A rotten wooden ladder was hanging on the wall of the decrepit house. The ladder led to the top floor. At the center of the stone house and the center of the lake was a wooden altar.

The altar was reinforced every year. It looked different from any of the altars Han Fei had encountered in the past. It was fully dark and covered in patterns of water, dream and divine worship.

“You only need to open the altar and put the altar inside.” That was easier said than done. The wooden ladder had been severely worn. One wrong step and one would fall into the deep well. Plus, the figurine was heavily. Carrying it was hard enough. One had to be careful when ascending the ladder.

Han Fei picked up the figurine after some hesitation. “All the altars in the memory world are symbolic. I do wonder what kind of altar Dream has prepared for itself.”

Han Fei worked his arms and entered the stone house. He grabbed the wooden ladder with one hand and climbed up. The sound of cracking spread. Wooden splinters fell and dropped into the deep well. They disappeared instantly.

Chapter 704: Worms

704 Worms

The stone house on the island was over 100 years old. According to legend, this was where the Lake God lived. When the villagers had any problem, they would prepare the sacrifice and throw it into the well in the middle of the house, and the Lake God would solve their problems.

The villages around the lake had this legend. However, no one had seen the real Lake God before. This was probably just a legend. Holding the rotten rungs, Han Fei was exceptionally careful. It was unclear when the wooden ladder was built. The surface was smooth and covered in green moss. The part closer to the water had completely rotted away. The rungs there were covered in small bite marks.

“Shush. Don’t influence him.” Guan Miao placed his finger on his lips. He didn’t even dare to breathe too loudly. The stone house was extremely quiet. Everyone was concerned about Han Fei. They prayed that he could complete the ritual. Han Fei reached the second floor easily. The wooden ladder felt like it was about to crash then. The nails that connected it to the wall loosened, and the ladder creaked noisily. It swayed too.

Han Fei lowered his head to look. Something was surfacing in the bottom of the well. His heart raced. The premonition of death reappeared. “There’s something calling for me inside the water.” People would have the urge to jump down when they were at a high spot. There was a voice in his head telling him to let go and embrace the water.

Han Fei shook his head to chase away the creepy thoughts. He grabbed the wooden ladder and continued to climb. As Han Fei approached the altar near the roof, the calm water underneath suddenly bubbled. A few bubbles broke through the surface.

“Give me the flashlight.” Yan Yue’s mother had a very bad feeling. She grabbed the flashlight from the lifeguard, retreated, and shone the light at the well.

“Do you want to kill him?” Guan Miao immediately stopped her. “The light will attract the things underwater. You’ll disturb the Lake God!”

“I just want to see what’s underwater. If it’s dangerous, we can warn Han Fei.” Yan Yue’s mother argued.

“He’s carrying the figurine on the ladder. The ritual has reached its latter half. If he gives up now, the three of you will end up like us, becoming a half-fish, half-human monster!” Guan Miao’s voice was low, but his tone was stern. He didn’t hide it anymore. He removed his shirt to show Yan Yue the severity of stopping the ritual. “Do you want to become like me?” The old man’s thin body was painted with water patterns. Strange scales grew among the patterns. The creepy thing was while the old man breathed, the scales and patterns expanded and constricted with his breathing. “Everyone who has participated in the ritual has turned into this. This is our one chance to rectify it.”

After Yan Yue’s mother saw Guan Miao’s body, she stopped insisting. The lifeguard was stunned. He pulled Yan Yue’s mother away and switched off the flashlight.

Han Fei on the ladder didn’t care about them. He was focused on the altar. In his memory, all the altars were placed on land or sacrificial table. Stability was the focus. This was the first time he encountered an altar that was situated so precariously. This abnormality grabbed his attention. The closer he got to the altar, the more anxious he felt. There was something very scary inside the altar. Using all of his limbs, Han Fei hung tight to the old and slippery wooden ladder. When he was climbing to the third floor, a black worm crawled out of the back of the wooden rung.

Han Fei didn’t fear this. He hated these strange creatures. “Kill it!”

The kitten appeared to understand Han Fei. It jumped out of the backpack and swatted the worm into the well. The worm didn’t float on the surface but immediately sank to become part of the lake. The moisture in the air thickened.

“You’re quite useful.” The kitten was quite proud to be praised by Han Fei. But it soon returned to its arrogant self. But it volunteered to lead the way for Han Fei.

“Be careful. The ladder is quite fragile.”

As they climbed upwards, more carvings appeared on the wall. Most of them were carved with nails. Han Fei had no idea what these carvings meant. Suddenly, a horrible sound came.

Creak...

The sound came from the back and inside of the ladder. It sounded like needles were piercing through the ladder. Even the kitten stopped. It growled at the top, and its fur bristled.

“This is not good.”

A black worm crawled out of the gap in the ladder. It was followed by more black worms. They dominated the upper half of the stone house. They even built a lair at the bottom of the lair. There was no light in the stone house. The black worms were all hidden in the dark. A normal person would have freaked out and slipped.

Even though Han Fei didn't want to admit it, he was a bit anxious. It was not a fear of death, but his body felt revulsion toward these black worms.

“These worms look different. They are from different species. They are the ugliness of the world. However, they all built a communal lair under the altar. This proves that they are generated by the same thing.” Han Fei didn't dare to move recklessly. He carefully observed the kitten and the black worms. Soon, he noticed something interesting.

The worms would make this strange sound when they faced the kitten. They were not afraid of the kitten but the nine black patterns on the kitten. Something similar to the worms resided inside the black patterns. However, the thing was strong, unlike these worms, which were incomplete.

The kitten hesitated for a while before it continued to climb. The ugly worms voluntarily parted for it. The kitten saw this and immediately attacked. The nine ghost tattoos crawled over the sewn-together skin. The worms touched by the kitten would die. Their bodies shriveled, and their darkest presence would be absorbed by the nine ghost tattoos.

A 'rain of dead bodies' fell. This would be a horrible experience for a normal person, but Han Fei was not affected. He followed behind the kitten and glanced at Guan Miao by the door.

With these black worms around, almost no one would be able to reach the altar. In other words, the people who came to deliver the figurine would die. However, this village had the culture of sending people to deliver the figurine annually. Han Fei heard from Guan Miao that they would find an orphan to deliver the figurine. Guan Miao didn't say the orphan would return safely or not. In the village, no one would care when an orphan went missing.

'No wonder they have the ritual every year. This altar and the animal sacrifices are just a front. The orphan who delivers the figurine is the real sacrifice! They are conducting live sacrifices!' Han Fei saw the carvings on the wall. He understood that these carvings were left behind by the orphans before they died. It was the sign of their final struggle. Some of the orphans were kind. They wanted to warn the others when they were bitten by thousands of worms. They left the warnings on the wall. However, they were too high up. When their successors saw the warnings, it would already be too late. Seeing the signs on the wall, Han Fei didn't find trouble with Guan Miao but continued to climb upwards.

Han Fei came to the third floor and saw the familiar human cocoons under the altar. The cocoon was carved with human faces. They were made from human souls.

"These black cocoons look the ugliest, but they are made from the mutation of human hearts."

Han Fei was only two meters away from the altar. The wooden ladder would disintegrate at any moment. His every step was very careful. Compared to Han Fei, the kitten was very courageous. After it absorbed the presence of the black worms, it turned its focus to the worm lair under the altar. Before Han Fei could stop it, the kitten did something dangerous. It leaped from the wooden ladder and landed on the worm lair. The dangling altar was fixed to the roof with several chains. The doors didn't appear like they had been opened before.

Han Fei carefully maintained his body balance as he moved. However, the wooden ladder still snapped slightly. From the start, the person who built the wooden ladder didn't want anyone to get close to the altar. This last stretch was impossible to pass.

Sensing the collapse of the ladder, Han Fei jumped towards the altar. He grabbed the chain with one hand and pulled himself up. Han Fei hugged the chain and turned back to look. The wooden ladder had completely crumbled. The wooden pieces fell into the well. The murky water splashed everywhere, shattering the silence.

The expression of the trio at the door was different. The lifeguard was worried and scared; Yan Yue's mother looked thoughtful but also thankful; Guan Miao had a complicated expression. He stopped holding his hands together.

Han Fei leaned on the chain. He wanted to see what was inside the altar. He reached and tried to open the altar door. The dried cocoons fell, and a horrible stench gushed out. Inside the altar was a human head that was so rotten the facial feature was not recognizable anymore. The human head was facing away from the door and faced a mirror inside the altar. The back of the head was cracked to form the pattern of a giant butterfly.

When Han Fei opened the altar, the mirror reflected Han Fei's face. The rotten head immediately changed to take on Han Fei's appearance!

"Lake God!" Guan Miao suddenly shouted and chanted something. However, he barely got far before he was stopped by Yan Yue's mother. "Han Fei, be careful of the water!"

Yan Yue's mother moved fast, but she was still too late.

The energy was gathering in the middle of the well. The water rippled, and a giant shadow appeared underwater!

Han Fei was sitting before the altar. His attention was fully grasped by the head inside the altar. "Mirror, altar, and head. Is this Dream's fourth resurrection ritual? But who is he trying to resurrect?"

The kitten could no longer contain the power inside the ghost tattoo once it consumed the worm lair. The nine ghost tattoos spiraled out of control. The threads on its body unraveled.

The ghost tattoos on the kitten seemed to sense something. The kitten's sharp claws grabbed the underside of the altar and easily tore it open. Then, it smacked the butterfly pattern on the back of the head.

The head and the mirror shattered at the same time. A blood cocoon about the size of a human heart was hidden inside the head. The blood cocoon wasn't big, but it was carved with the names of many souls. It was far more imposing than any cocoon Han Fei had met.

Just as the kitten was about to absorb the blood cocoon, the water cracked open, and a gigantic shadow leaped out of the water!

Everyone was shocked.

“Is there really a water monster here?”

The monster was like fish and snake combined together. Each of its scales was a wailing human face. Endless water ghosts weaved behind it. Its presence was like a tsunami.

“Dream’s fourth ritual is not to revive itself but this creature inside the lake?”

There were two mutation routes for the cocoons. One was to gather all the beauty in the world and become the perfect humans like the Butterfly; the other was to gather all the death and misfortune to become a monster like Big Sin.

This fourth ritual should be Dream’s insurance. If it couldn’t be reborn as humans, then a monster was not bad too.

Han Fei was reminded of the giant cocoon under Ziggurat. Dream did succeed in the end. But it was unclear whether it became a perfect human or a monster.

Han Fei stepped on the chain and pulled out Rest in Peace. He was going to buy time for his precious pet.

“This thing has consumed so many humans. It can be considered a butcher, right?”

Chapter 705: A New God

705 A New God

The snake and fish-like monster led many water ghosts and leaped out of the water. The pressure of that moment would stun many. The lifeguard had already fallen to the ground. Guan Miao and Yan

Yue's mother were also scared and speechless. The murky water splashed on their bodies. When they reacted and wanted to warn Han Fei, the monster had already opened its mouth to consume the altar.

The stinging stench rushed into the nostrils. Han Fei held the butcher's knife and stared at the monster's maw. Hundreds of teeth intertwined. Broken bones were stuck on them, and black hair squeezed between the gaps. Down the throat were some balls of meat. Falling into the monster's jaw was no different from falling into a meat grinder.

"How is there such a scary thing in the lake?" Han Fei stepped on the chain and moved. The monster planned to eat Han Fei along with the altar. Han Fei had no space to evade up there on the top floor.

"My cat is still absorbing the blood cocoon. I can't let the monster disturb it." Han Fei quickly adjusted himself to face this creature several times larger than it. His calm eyes shone with madness. As the water monster bit at the altar, the blade glowed!

"Rest in Peace!" The light of humanity chased away the darkness that had accumulated in the stone house for millennia. Han Fei finally got to see the many carvings on the wall. The orphans were made into sacrifices. They thought they had finally been given a purpose. But in the end, they were only being used by the villagers. They were the expendables. The villagers never saw them as humans.

Ugliness and darkness were exposed by Rest in Peace. Han Fei swung and the blade collided with the monster's mouth!

Black blood splattered all over the stone house. The monster wailed. Its injured mouth bit the chain and altar. The dangling altar had a huge chunk taken away. A few of the chains snapped. Han Fei tried very hard before he found his balance again. Wooden splinters flew everywhere, and the chains swayed. The monster's red eyes glared at Han Fei before it fell back into the water. The murky water splashed on the walls. Han Fei grabbed the remaining chains and felt fear. The stone house was three stories tall, but the monster reached that height with a simple leap.

Han Fei turned to look at the broken altar. The kitten jumped to the roof to absorb the blood cocoon. Its body had changed. It looked less like a cat but more like a person of tragedy. Ghost tattoos spread on its body. Its fur coat was torn apart, and it was growing to become like Han Fei!

“The cat wants to turn into me?” Han Fei heard ghost stories about how pet dogs and cats would mimic their owners after being with them for a long time. Some of them would try to kill their owners to take away their lives. Others would become guardian spirits to protect the house. “My pet likes that I’m always on the edge of death, but they will never want to kill me.”

The kitten was still mutating. Han Fei didn’t dare to look away. The state was not optimistic for him. The chains that supported the altar had been torn apart, and the wooden ladder had disintegrated. The walls were covered in moss and thus too slippery to be climbed on. If Han Fei wanted to leave, the only way was to jump into the water. However, how was that different from committing suicide? Han Fei could only wait for the kitten to finish its mutation.

The group at the door was very nervous too. Even though Han Fei had cut the water monster, it didn’t harm the large creature at all. Everyone stared at the water. Han Fei held his breath and his muscles were tense. The water started to surface with small bubbles. Bloodflowers bloomed on the murky surface. Then, the water surface exploded again. The giant monster leaped faster than before as it charged at Han Fei!

The altar had already been destroyed. Han Fei had nowhere to hide. He carried the mutating cat on his back and stepped on the remaining chain. He aimed his knife at the pair of red eyes!

The blade shone, and a deep gash appeared on the monster’s head. One of its eyes was shattered. The pain made the monster go insane. Its giant maw bit the altar and chain. As its body fell back into the water, it dragged the chain with it. The rusted chain slipped. Han Fei hung onto it with both of his legs. He bit Rest in Peace, grabbed the falling chain with one hand, and hugged the kitten with his other.

“Han Fei!” The people at the door were anxious. The top of the stone house had been fully destroyed. The altar fell. Only one end of the last chain was still encased in the wall. Han Fei swayed above the well. He could fall at any moment. “How much longer do you need?” Han Fei turned to look at the kitten. It was still growing in size. The chain was not strong enough to hold both of their weight. The connection between the chain and the wall loosened. The monster was about to leap out again. Han Fei’s mind spun to think of a solution. He couldn’t climb on the slippery wall. His only solution was to swing the chain and then jump towards the entrance.

“I can’t afford to wait any longer!” Han Fei tied himself to the kitten using the cursed red threads. He was about to try to jump to the entrance when the whole house shook. Something was damaging the house’s foundation underwater. More red things floated up to the surface. The bottom of the floating altar was crashed through, and the water level started to rise!

The monster jumped out for the third time. The human faces on its scales screamed. This time, Han Fei had no place to hide.

“Come at me!” Han Fei’s eyes narrowed. He kicked at the wall. As the monster’s jaws chomped close, he loosed his grip on the chain. If he stayed, he would be eaten alive, so he had to take this risk!

While the monster rose up, Han Fei fell down. He controlled his direction and brushed past the monster.

The sharp blade cut into the water monster. Han Fei’s eyes were filled with determination and cruelty. He cut out a large wound on the side of the water monster’s body. The scales that entrapped human faces flew everywhere. The black blood drenched Han Fei. Han Fei swung madly in these few seconds to injure the monster’s internal organs. The Lake God had consumed endless orphans. It didn’t expect that someone could cut through its scale and deliver such intense damage. The monster screeched, and its giant body tried to press on Han Fei to bring him into the water!

Han Fei knew he’d be dead once he was underwater. When he touched the water, Han Fei swam towards the entrance. However, the monster was very smart. It used its body to block Han Fei’s way. To make things worse, water ghosts were gathering towards Han Fei.

The bushy black hair swayed underwater. There were many Lake God figurines under the water. Each figurine represented the loss of innocent young life. The murky lake water rushed into Han Fei’s ears. He couldn’t even open his eyes. Han Fei tried to escape when the kitten on his back was bound by the Lake God’s snake tail. The red threads around the kitten tightened. The water monster wanted to drag the kitten down into the lake bed. Han Fei didn’t cut the red threads to escape on his own, but he cut at the water monster’s tail.

“Xu Qin!” Curses coursed through his body. None of the water ghosts dared to come any closer, but the water monster was not affected. It dragged the kitten and Han Fei further underwater!

The water pressure became unbearable. The pain came from every part of the body. The bloated faces surrounded him. The oxygen in his lungs depleted, and he moved further away from the water surface. Every inch of his skin was enveloped by the watery darkness. When Han Fei was inches away from death, the ghost tattoos on the kitten exploded with the extreme presence of death. The black tattoos burst out of the kitten like claws. They gushed towards Han Fei. The Lake God screamed again. It pressured the hesitant water ghosts to attack Han Fei. The bloated face bit Han Fei’s body. Both parties

were poisoned. Han Fei's life point dropped, and the presence of death on the ghost tattoos intensified. When both elements reached maximum intensity, the nine ghost tattoos tore apart the kitten's body and branded themselves on Han Fei's skin.

Blood and flesh overlapped. Han Fei's physique improved tremendously. The most important detail was the thing trapped inside the ghost tattoos finally found freedom. The large shadow, about 5 meters wide, was like a school of hungry piranhas. It immediately embraced the Lake God.

"Big Sin!"

The non-human vessel Dream had prepared for itself was covered in death, tragedy, despair, and misfortune. The monster struggled as it tried to bury Han Fei underwater. The water splashed, and they entered the last battle.

Han Fei was about to suffocate. He waved the blade at the water monster. At this crucial moment, something unexpected happened.

The blade cut the water monster, and the wounds appeared to be purified. The souls of the orphans crawled out of the Lake God's flesh and scales. Then, they voluntarily moved towards Rest in Peace. The Grade D Rest in Peace could harm wicked souls but also awaken the murdered kind spirits.

The scales flew everywhere, and the organ shattered. The sacrificed orphans became the energy that helped to weaken the Lake God. It could no longer fight Big Sin and was consumed by Big Sin.

Rest in Peace glowed in the water. Pairs of eyes looked at Han Fei. It was hard to tell if they were fishes or something else. Han Fei didn't have the time to care. He used his last bit of energy for swimming to the surface.

"This is all your fault! We're trying to help us, but you are trying to use us as sacrifices!" The lifeguard grabbed Guan Miao and slammed him into the wall. "I'll kill you!"

"Kill me then. I don't mind dying as long as the Lake God's anger can be dissipated." Gao Miao looked at his ugly body. "I don't plan to live anymore. I just want my descendants to live a normal life."

“Han Fei has helped so many people in the city. We’re all hoping for him to lead us out!” The lifeguard planned to throw Guan Miao into the well, but at that moment, the water surface rippled.

The three quickly retreated. Yan Yue’s mother was the first to react. She sensed the curse’s presence. “It’s not the monster! It’s Han Fei!”

An arm reached out of the water to grab at the floating scrap of the altar. Han Fei gasped heavily for air. The three were stunned when they saw Han Fei. They didn’t expect the man to survive.

The lifeguard quickly snapped into action. He instantly jumped into the well and dragged the broken altar and Han Fei to the shore.

“How are you still alive? What about the Lake God?” Guan Miao fell to the ground. He couldn’t believe his eyes.

“Lake God? If you want to meet it, I can send you there.” Han Fei collapsed once he was hauled up to the dry ground. “Dream has sacrificed almost all the youths in the nearby villagers. The mutated blood cocoon is very unique. It is tainted with your livelihood, blessings, and bloodlines. For the sake of the blood cocoon, I’m not going to kill you.” Without that blood cocoon, Big Sin wouldn’t escape from the ghost tattoo. After consuming the blood cocoon, it broke through Fu Sheng’s shackles.

“Have you killed Lake God?” Guan Miao’s voice was shaking.

“I merely brought you a new God.” A giant shadow slowly surfaced on the water. Big Sin that had consumed Lake God and endless water ghosts appeared before everyone. Its body slowly took on the human shape, but overall, it still looked very ugly. It was scarier than the previous Lake God.

The lifeguard quickly grabbed Han Fei and ran when he saw the monster. Yan Yue’s mother was too stunned to move. She hadn’t seen such a scary monster at the theme park.

As its owner was dragged away, Big Sin burst through the stone house to chase after Han Fei. It loved this crazy world so much.

“Why is it chasing after us?”

“Let go! That’s my pet!” Han Fei’s head almost knocked against the rock on the ground.

“Pet?” “Don’t you think it’s cute?” Han Fei stopped the running lifeguard. “It just wants to be with me.”

Chapter 706: Key

706 Key

Han Fei didn’t have the time to immerse himself in the joy of reunion. He dragged his broken body up from the ground. When he was pulled underwater by Lake God, he almost died. In that situation, Big Sin, who was bound by the altar, was heavily simulated. Combine that with the sacrifice of the blood cocoon, Big Sin managed to break free.

This ugly monster found a trace of Dream on Fu Sheng’s altar. It became stronger and scarier. It emitted stronger misfortune and death too.

“This, this is your pet?!” The lifeguard grabbed Han Fei’s clothes and hid behind him. He didn’t even dare to look at Big Sin.

“It is my pet.” Han Fei sighed in relief when he saw Big Sin. It was a very powerful ally. Big Sin was sometimes more powerful than Pure Hatred. “It has already consumed the Lake God, so it will protect all the villagers here in the future. Even though it looks ugly, it is not bad. It is our friend.”

“Friend?” The lifeguard forced himself to look at Big Sin. The semi-human monster crawled toward Han Fei. It allowed Han Fei to pet its head, but its spike pierced into Han Fei’s flesh. Neither of them minded.

“Han Fei, your hand is bleeding.”

“It’s fine. I’m raising my resistance against Soul Poison. Didn’t you notice all the water spiders died after they bit me?” Han Fei patted Big Sin’s head. “Do you want to try?”

“No, thank you.” The lifeguard shook his head vehemently.

“It’s quite gentle. You should communicate with it more. Its name is Big Sin.” Sitting on Big Sin’s back, Han Fei returned to the stone house.

Staring at Han Fei and Big Sin, the lifeguard mumbled, “We might be saved this time.” Big Sin led Han Fei back to Guan Miao. The ugly old man knelt before Big Sin and prayed in the local dialect. He appeared to be asking for divine forgiveness.

“That Lake God was merely a monster who had lived for a long time. It became the Lake God due to your worship and faith. While it enjoyed your sacrifices, it also preyed on the villagers.” Han Fei grabbed Guan Miao and studied the scales on his body. After Big Sin ate the blood cocoon, the scales on Guan Miao started to recover. However, the old man’s life force was gone. He looked even older.

“The vacation town’s young men have been made into the blood cocoons and the others into water ghosts. They won’t be coming back. If you really want change, have faith in Big Sin. At least, it’s more reliable than that Lake God.” Big Sin was the manifestation of tragedy. Its life was tragic. If it gained people’s faith, the pressure on it might lessen.

After inspecting the stone house, Han Fei checked the island. After making sure he didn’t miss anything, he led the group and left. Destruction of the fourth ritual took too much time. He had to rush back to Happiness Neighborhood lest there were accidents. The four of them got on the boat. Big Sin submerged underwater and pushed the boat from below. The lantern swayed. The water ghosts stayed away. They had recognized Big Sin as their new master.

Before Han Fei reached the shore, the villagers had gathered. They could sense the changes in their bodies and knew that Han Fei had succeeded. Guan Miao cooperated with Han Fei. He didn’t tell them what happened in the stone house but hailed Big Sin as the new Lake God. The water rippled as Big Sin climbed out of the water. The villagers immediately knelt on the ground and prayed. Big Sin was bored. The presence of death filled up the air.

“It’s getting late. We need to return to Happiness Neighborhood.” Han Fei told Guan Miao some things and prepared to leave. The four took the taxi, and Big Sin raced behind them. It was fast and could morph into shadows, so it could always keep up.

“Han Fei, where did you get your pet? Why can it absorb Dream’s power?” Yan Yue’s mother asked. Dream had prepared the ritual, but it benefited this monster instead.

"I'm not sure." Han Fei didn't plan to explain anything.

"It has dominated the blood cocoon and consumed the Lake God, cutting off Dream's backup plan. Now you can control the water ghosts in the lake. This is crucial to us." Yan Yue's mother pointed at the city in the dark. "The underwater system of this city is connected to the lake. You can have it chase the water ghosts into the underwater system and have them be our eyes and ears."

"Hmm. That is not a bad idea." Han Fei nodded seriously.

"The main issue is that your pet looks too scary. The citizens will be scared when they see it. So it's better for it to stay in the dark." Even Yan Yue's mother felt uneasy around Big Sin. Yan Yue was very fragile. If she accidentally brushed against Big Sin, she would be tortured by Soul Poison.

The black taxi entered Happiness Neighborhood before midnight. Different from the outside, the night sky here was red. The overlapping of this area and the cryptic world intensified. This place would become the crossroad for both worlds every midnight. The citizens gathered in Buildings One, Two, and Three. They were so scared that they hid inside the rooms.

"You're finally back!" Worm who was guarding the entrance was relieved to see Han Fei. "The sky has turned red. The cleaned apartments started to get strange again. Currently, Xiao Yu's mother is the only one handling everything."

"Don't worry, I'll turn this into a safe zone." Han Fei waved behind him and Big Sin walked out between Building Ten and One. Its over 5 meters large body shone underneath the red sky. It was very oppressive. "Tell everyone to stay indoors. I'm going to patrol the place tonight."

Sitting on Big Sin's shoulders, Han Fei took out the script. He studied the other stories. After Big Sin awakened, he had the ability to fight back.

Worm looked at Han Fei. His lips twitched as he sensed the death from Big Sin. 'Even though he's only reading the script, it's like he's plotting a murder. Is that the power of a top actor?'

The clock at midnight chimed. Happiness Neighborhood overlapped with the cryptic world. The air of despair rose up from underground and soaked into the walls. It grabbed at everyone's throat like invisible hands. The citizens were shivering in fear. No one knew who would die next. Their only hope was Han Fei. In extreme fear, they looked outside the window. The shadow on the monster's shoulders gave them comfort.

"Come. Let me see what is hidden underneath Happiness Neighborhood. How much despair has accumulated at this place built for the orphans?" When Han Fei was first here, he ended up escaping; the second time, he was here, he found the feeling of home; this third time, he became the owner and decided to chase out all the unwanted tenants.

Time ticked by. With a scream, Happiness Neighborhood revealed its other side.

On the surface of the buildings' outside walls, colorful paintings of children playing appeared. They were playing different games with bright smiles on their faces. However, for each game, one child had to die. On this path paved by death, the children were killed until the last 31 remained.

Laughter and cries echoed. Han Fei had no idea where they came from. The adults hiding inside the buildings started to act strangely. Some of them sought death, while others saw their dearly departed. Of course, most felt fear, like they too were forced to play the death games.

While the neighborhood mutated, Han Fei had been observing. He followed Big Sin's eyes and focused on Building 11. "The source of despair is under that building!"

Big Sin charged toward Building 11. Its large body rammed through the first floor. The road cracked and the windows shattered. Big Sin was told by Han Fei to attack. This was the first time Han Fei saw Big Sin not hold back as well.

As the manifestation of tragedy, Big Sin was covered in misfortune. When necessary, its body could expand in size!

Human arms slammed on the ground. Its skin was stuck to the ground, and death was injected underground. The creature was the king of poison. Nothing could harm it but anything that it touched, be it humans or ghosts would be poisoned. A rustling voice came from below Building 11. Soon, a monster fully shaped by despair appeared. Han Fei had seen this thing before. Its body was like a

centipede with human heads joined together. Each face was a visage of despair. Others were afraid of this creature. Once they were captured, their heads would be torn off and made into part of the creature. However, Big Sin was not worried. Before the monster reacted, it grabbed the monster and shoved it into its mouth. Big Sin was very efficient. It would bite any creature to tell if it was dangerous or not. The things that Big Sin couldn't kill would only make it stronger.

Holding Rest in Peace, Han Fei jumped down. He pulled the red strings and examined the crack before Building 11. "You have so much fun chasing me before, haven't you?"

Han Fei was effective too. His every attack was meant to kill. He wanted to kill the enemy in the fastest way possible. The citizens by the windows watched. The stronger Han Fei was, the brighter the flames of hope in their hearts.

"Shall we go help him?"

"We're only going to add trouble."

"Counting last time, he has saved me twice already. Is he really a fugitive?"

"He should be framed."

The survivors had improved impressions of Han Fei. They started to side with him. The crack on the ground expanded. The monsters made from despair crawled out. Most of them were stopped by Big Sin. Han Fei hid behind Big Sin with Rest in Peace. He was waiting for the chance to strike.

Han Fei felt at ease for the first time in a battle. "Are we that powerful?"

The massacre continued for a long time. When the last despair was defeated, the front of Building 11 collapsed. The building had sunken about half a meter underground. The cracks spread like a spider web. Big Sin was covered in wounds, but it didn't mind. In fact, it looked like it wanted more.

"Come. Let's go down to look." Han Fei and Big Sin smashed through the ground.

Even the soil at Happiness Neighborhood was imbued with despair. The despair bound together like blood vessels and connected all the apartment buildings. Following the vessels, Han Fei found the source of the despair.

In the center of the neighborhood's underground was an incomplete altar. He pulled the cloth away. There was no figurine inside the altar but a key. The key appeared to be made from human bones. It was made from eight parts. All the misfortune and despair at Happiness Neighborhood coagulated into this key.

"The existence of the Happiness Neighborhood is to produce this key?" Han Fei was reminded of a detail he was told when he first started the game. "I remember someone told me that Little Eight is a key that can open the exit. At the time, I was confused. How could a person be a key?"

Chapter 707: Parents

707 Parents

The altar under Happiness Neighborhood was very unique. The despair on it was so thick that even Han Fei had a hard time getting close.

"The theme park managers built this place to create this key, but what is the use of this key?" The pain came from the back of his mind. Han Fei was reminded of the black box in his mind. Fu Sheng once said that only those with the deepest despair could possess the black box. Perhaps the key was for the black box.

Han Fei had just reached for the key when his life force was almost taken away. The negative energy on the key was so heavy that it envied everything alive. Han Fei had no choice but to rely on Big Sin.

Big Sin misunderstood Han Fei. It liked to eat the items inside the altar. With permission from Han Fei, it reached inside the altar and consumed the key. Even Big Sin collapsed to the ground in pain after eating the key. It curled up and was in deep pain. After a long time, it finally adjusted.

"How are you still fine?" Han Fei looked at Big Sin that was slowly standing up. After consuming the blood cocoon, the Lake God, and a trace of Dream, Big Sin had already become a Grade D pet. "It feels like Big Sin has redefined the meaning of pet. I wonder if the players on the surface world will start keeping monsters as pets."

The underground secret at Happiness Neighborhood had been found. Han Fei felt better. Happiness Neighborhood was now truly a safe zone. After communicating with Big Sin, Han Fei found out Big Sin could vomit out the key at any time. Han Fei then had two more things to do.

One was to destroy Dream's other ritual, and two was to aid Lee Guo Er to gain 100 points to enter the theme park.

The situation had gotten out of control. The city had submerged into darkness. All the citizens lost their humanity. They were tortured by fear until they became monsters. Fu Sheng showed his experience to Han Fei. He used the most direct way to inform Han Fei about the horror when the real world and the cryptic world overlapped. Even in tragedy, Han Fei didn't give up. He tried his best to change destiny.

Everyone witnessed his hard work. He was the one who came out to protect everyone; he was the one who found the safe zone; Han Fei was like a beacon of hope in this lawless city.

Han Fei had saved many people's lives, and that was the undeniable truth.

"What the! That's crazy!" Worm and Xiao Jia walked out of the corridor. They originally came to help Han Fei, but they didn't expect Big Sin to consume all the underground monsters.

"After this, I will start to clean out the area around Happiness Neighborhood. Pay attention to the nearby citizens. If you discover people like Xiao Yu who can communicate with ghosts, inform me immediately." Han Fei knew that most ghosts appeared because of obsession. They were originally human. For example, Xiao Yu's mother. To save her daughter, she rushed over immediately after her death. Her soul retained her love for her daughter.

This situation shouldn't be an exception. If Han Fei could gather all these people, it could be a powerful force. The players looked through all the survivors and managed to find two unique citizens.

The first was called Zhao Gu. He was an orphan. He was 14 and was responsible for looking after the younger orphans. After the orphanage became haunted, he was the only survivor. He hated himself for his weakness. He even wanted to end his life. But at that moment, he heard the voices of his little brothers and sisters. The dead orphans had been protecting him.

The second was called Shan Shan. Her husband died several years ago in a car accident. Then, she lost her smile. Last night, a mad murderer charged into her home. When she was about to be killed, a soul opened his wings to shield her.

There should be other survivors like these, but they didn't want to expose themselves. Han Fei understood their concern. He chose to lead Zhao Gu and Shan Shan out to clean up the neighborhood and strengthen their ghost families. When the other survivors saw the benefits from this, they would voluntarily come clean.

"You'll guard the neighborhood. The rest of you come with me."

The black taxi slowly started. Han Fei started to hunt down the evil ghost. Zhao Gu and Shan Shan showed their determined side. They tried hard to become stronger. Humans were complicated creatures. They would commit suicide, but at the same time, they would do anything to survive. Of course, Han Fei knew tragedies would happen when the two worlds overlapped, but it shouldn't stop humanity from shining. Humanity's kindness, memory, and company allowed the lost souls to return to their parents. They were like the compensation this maddening world had given to the humans.

Han Fei had stayed in the cryptic world for a long time. It felt like he had returned to the start of the game. He spent one night creating a safe zone around Happiness Neighborhood.

Zhao Gu's friends and Shan Shan's husband ate many ghosts and became Lingering Spirits. With Xiao Yu's mother, they should be powerful enough to protect Happiness Neighborhood.

"Be it Fu Sheng or Mad Laughter, they have ignored the existing citizens. A single person might not be strong enough to change the world, but it is undeniable that every new era will be welcomed by a group of the common people." Mad Laughter and Fu Sheng destroyed the city for their own plan. Only Han Fei was saving people. They had their own plans. Han Fei didn't think so far ahead. He was only following his heart.

At 5 am, Han Fei returned to the neighborhood with supplies. When part of the survivors saw the changes to Zhao Gu and Shan Shan, three more survivors with protection from the dead stood forward. Han Fei found someone to make a calculation. Among three hundred citizens, there would be one unique citizen. So using that ratio, in this city of around 10,000,000 people, there should be at least 30000 people with guardian angels.

“Even if the two worlds collide, humans can survive albeit with a heavy price.” Han Fei met up with the unique citizens in person and taught them how to communicate with ghosts. He also told them how to make their families and friends stronger. To gain some trust, Han Fei showed them his red strings with Xu Qin and told him his story with Xu Qin. After that, Han Fei went to rest until 9 am.

Every citizen waited for dawn to come, but the sun never rose. The sun appeared to have been extinguished.

“I wish to bath in the sun...” Xiao Jia played on his computer. He hadn’t slept for the night. His head was heavy. When he thought about lying down, emergency news popped on his computer. All the survivors in the city received the notification on their phones. They switched on the phone with confusion. Then, their expression slowly changed.

“What the! How shameless can these people be?” Xiao Jia leaped up from his chair. He hugged his laptop and went to find Han Fei. “Han Fei! This is bad!”

At the same time, Qiang Wei and Lee Guo Er ran to Han Fei’s room. They were both holding their phones.

“What’s wrong?” Han Fei was a light sleeper. He woke up once someone got near.

“Look at your phone! That F and your adopted parents went to the tv station. They said you’re the reason why this tragedy is happening! They’ve propped you up as the scapegoat!” Xiao Jia screamed and placed the laptop before Han Fei.

The video was rather blurry. The pair of a middle-aged couple who led Han Fei back from the hospital stood before the camera. Their hair was white, and they looked haggard. They were worried about Han Fei but decided to tell the truth.

The host took out the murder weapons, murder diary, and scripts that were found in Han Fei’s basement. His adopted parents called Han Fei a serial killer. They even blamed him for all the nightmares happening in the city. They said he was the devil’s child, and he had loved to torture animals since he was young. He had a violent tendency too.

They finally decided to reveal the truth in the face of tragedy. They wanted to save more people. Han Fei's adopted parents persuaded the survivors to be careful of Han Fei. No one should trust Han Fei. In fact, everyone should try to kill Han Fei.

Those who didn't know Han Fei would believe the couple. F managed to get the video out to the whole city before the signal was down. Everyone lived in fear and despair. They needed a channel to vent. F's plan was to make Han Fei into that scapegoat.

"Han Fei, are your adopted parents... telling the truth?" Lee Guo Er asked directly. She trusted Han Fei implicitly. When others hesitated, she cut to the chase.

"I've found my memories." Han Fei was calm. He was not angry. "The orphanage will find specific parents for the orphan to cultivate them into children with extreme despair. They found human traffickers to be No. 11's parents, and they got me a pair of serial killers as my adopted parents." Han Fei remembered many details. "The couple has gone mad. They created an illusion that their child was the real murderer. They cleaned up the deeds for the sake of their children while they were the ones who had been going around murdering people."

Han Fei went downstairs and walked around the neighborhood. Many people watched him, and Han Fei could feel the hostility.

"The party who created this tragedy now wants to pin this on me." Han Fei stood in the middle and looked at everyone. "They're the ones who harm you. I will tell you the truth, and I hope you can listen to me. If you still think it's unsafe to be with me, you can leave at any time. Happiness Neighborhood will not stop anyone from leaving."

Ever since he started playing Perfect Life, Han Fei had been slandered countless times. He was already used to it. The best solution was to use actions to prove his innocence. Han Fei told the survivors about his past and the theme park.

Before Han Fei finished, a few people had already sneaked out the back door. Then, more people started to leave.

"Are we going to let them go?" Xiao Jia looked at the deserters. "We've saved their lives, but they're abandoning us because of an unknown video. This is disheartening."

“This is normal. Once you’ve picked a path, new people will join, and old people will leave.” Han Fei looked at the remaining survivors, and he felt warmth. He had gained the approval of most people. “I will make Happiness Neighborhood the happiest place. Trust me.”

Han Fei went to find Yan Yue. “It looks like the sun will not rise again. Aren’t the theme park managers planning to completely sever the connection between the cryptic world and the real world? Why is the overlapping more obvious?”

“I don’t know how they plan to sever the connection. They should be at the final stage.” Yan Yue’s mother glanced at the theme park. The night sky over there appeared to have a black hole in the sky. “I think the managers are in trouble.”

“It looks like Mad Laughter has made his move.” Han Fei then stopped caring about the theme park. His goal was to kill Dream. “Tell me about the four other ritual locations. We’ll try to destroy all of them today.”

“The fifth and sixth rituals are at the same place. It’s at a city hospital. It has the city’s largest organ donor center and morgue. Dream selected its best organs there and planted them inside human bodies for cultivation. Then, it scattered them around the city. Basically, Dream is cultivating vessels all over the city. We need to control all these vessels, and then we will have the chance to destroy Dream.”

“In that case, we’ll need the help of the water ghosts.” Han Fei asked Big Sin to command the water ghosts to enter the underwater system. “Hopefully, the innocent citizens won’t be scared when hands reach out of their toilet.”

Chapter 708: Morgue

708 Morgue

The sky at 10.30 am was still dark. Everyone was waiting for the sun to rise, but it wasn’t happening. The cryptic world was like the bottom of the ocean. Darkness had submerged the city. Supernatural events became more prevalent, and more people lost their minds. The sins were exposed, and humans became scarier than ghosts.

“The despair of humanity accumulated in the cryptic world. When the two worlds collide, the scariest things are not the ghost but the despair reentering people’s hearts.” Bloody scenes occurred all around the city. Many survivors only then realized how close everyone was to evil.

After a short rest, Han Fei led part of the players and Yan Yue back to the city. In just two days, the city had completely changed. The old rules collapsed, and new rules were absent. Everyone was consumed by despair. There was chaos everywhere.

“How many ghosts are there in the cryptic world?” Ever since that morning, Han Fei had been contemplating that question. He would take down any hostile ghosts he encountered on the way to his destination. This was for two goals. One was to increase Lee Guo Er’s points, and two was to increase Xiao Yu’s mother’s power. At first, Han Fei believed that one day he’d cleanse the city. However, he soon realized how naïve he was. Many buildings would start to inhabit new ghosts after the old ones had been cleaned out.

“It looks like I have to deal with this problem at its source.” Han Fei knew that Fu Sheng wanted to use this cryptic world’s memory to convince him of the necessity of destroying the cryptic world. However, Han Fei was convinced that there was another path. Moving through the city, another long cavalcade appeared behind Han Fei’s taxi. Han Fei would help any survivor who still had any humanity intact. This was when Han Fei’s Soul-depth Touch shone. He could immediately tell if a person’s soul was twisted from a handshake.

“Han Fei, are we being too obvious?” Xiao Jia glanced at the vehicles behind them. “We’re standing out too much. The ghosts aren’t dumb. Won’t they gang up on us?”

“I have similar concerns. That’s why we need to find more unique citizens and have them stand on our side.”

At 11 am, Han Fei’s taxi arrived at Ren Ai Private Hospital in the city center.

...

“Did you guys hear the sound of water?” Nurse Xiao He poked her head out of the office table. Her face was pale, and her voice was low.

“Shush. Those things might still be here.” A man’s voice came out of the dresser. He sounded very nervous. Xiao He shrunk backward. She glanced towards the water cooler in the office. There was a human head floating inside it. The water cooler had a very small hole. She had no idea how the human head managed to fit into the cooler and how it was still speaking. Black water weeds grew around the area where the neck was decapitated. Worms wiggled out of the ears and nose. The head slowly turned in the water cooler. When it turned to face Xiao He, the closed eyes suddenly opened!

The bloated eyeballs looked at Xiao He. The mouth opened and closed as if talking to Xiao He. Xiao He was so scared that she curled even deeper under the table. Xiao He turned her head away and forced herself to not look at it.

Xiao He and her four other colleagues had been trapped here for two days already. Yesterday night, one colleague went out to take a look, and he didn’t come back. Everything was getting worse. Xiao He felt like breaking down. She started to see and hear things. Sometimes, she wondered if she had lost her mind.

“Xiao He, are you still alright?” An aged man’s voice came from outside the door. Xiao He covered her mouth when she heard this voice.

“The patient in Room 1 is heavily injured. Can you go help him? His intestines have been dug out, and there’s blood everywhere...” No matter how hard the old man pleaded, Xiao He pretended not to hear him even though she was very familiar with this voice. The kind old man was the patient in Room 2. He was normally so optimistic, but he died three days ago. His body was still at the morgue.

“Xiao He, if you’re there, say something. The patient is not going to make it. His children are crying. He really needs help.” Since yesterday night, the elder came to knock on the door, hoping to get Xiao He to come to help the other patients. But the thing that scared Xiao He the most was that the elder only called her name when she had four other colleagues hiding in the office. The knocking eventually stopped. The elder walked outside the door but didn’t enter the office.

“Is he finally gone?” Xiao He knelt on the ground. She suddenly wanted to cry. The world was suffocating, and hell was everywhere.

“It’s already noon. Why is the sky still so dark? By this time yesterday, at least the sun was already up, and the ghosts had faded away.” A middle-aged woman’s voice came from the deepest part of the office. Xiao He crawled out of the desk to take a look. She couldn’t see anyone. The person hid very well.

“Sister Qin?” Xiao He called carefully.

“What’s wrong, Xiao He?” Xiao He sighed in relief when she heard the reply, but her heart soon trembled again. She whispered, “I haven’t heard from the new intern nurse since yesterday night. How is she doing?”

“She’s in the dresser with me. She’s still sleeping.” Doctor Wang’s voice came from the dresser. This answer aroused Xiao He’s suspicion. The dresser was small. It was barely enough to fit one person. How could two people fit in it, and one was sleeping soundly?

“Doctor Wang, do you mind waking her up? I have some questions for her.”

After Xiao He said that Doctor Wang’s voice disappeared, and the whole office became so silent.

“Doctor Wang? Sister Qin?” Xiao He’s heart pounded. She looked at the dresser not far away, and her heart was consumed by fear. These past two days, she had been communicating with Doctor Wang and Sister Qin through voices. She hadn’t seen them in person. Xiao He slowly approached the dresser. She raised her shaking hands to grab the dresser door. After taking a deep breath, she eased the dresser open.

Xiao He’s eyes narrowed. Then, with a whiff, she yanked the doors fully open. There were a few brand new doctors’ coats inside the dresser, but there was no one there.

“Where are the people? Their voices came from this place!” Fear enveloped Xiao He, and she broke out in cold sweat. If her colleagues didn’t make those voices, then who had she been talking to? “I’ve been staying with ghosts!” Xiao He shivered. Suddenly, the familiar voices returned.

“We thought we could hide this from you longer...” Doctor Wang and Sister Qin’s voices started at the same time. They sent chills down Xiao He’s spine.

Xiao He turned around and saw Doctor Wang and Sister Qin, whose chests were punctured. They looked at her gloomily. Their faces were covered in death spots, and their smiles were harrowing.

The most terrifying was the new intern nurse. She stood beside Doctor Wang. Her body was covered in wounds, and her neck was snapped. She couldn't even speak.

"Are... you dead?"

"Yes. And it's your turn now!"

Three twisted souls charged at Xiao He. The door of the office was kicked down at that moment. A patient rushed in, grabbed Xiao He by her wrist, and ran.

"Uncle Ying?" Xiao He felt the chill from her wrist. The elder's hand was cold as ice.

"I've been warning you since yesterday night. You refuse to listen. You're the only good kid at this hospital. Those doctors with rotten hearts are all dead now." The elder ran very fast, very much unlike a dead person.

"Thank you for saving me. I was too afraid yesterday night." Xiao He didn't expect she'd be saved by a dead elder. She was both scared and guilty. She was about to apologize to the elder when she noticed something was wrong. The elder didn't lead her to the exit but towards the underground!

"That's... the morgue!" Xiao He wanted to shake the elder loose, but the elder grabbed hold of her tightly. The chill cut into her bone.

"Uncle Ying, where are we going?"

"You'll know when we're there. There's no place that's safe at this hospital. I need you to hide in my bed first." The elder said without turning around. The temperature dropped, and Xiao He became more afraid. The door that she rarely used was at the end of the corridor.

"Remember, do not make any noise. Just pretend you're a dead body." The elder pushed open the iron door and led Xiao He in. This private hospital had the city's biggest mortuary and morgue. There was a

legend that the hospital had been selling organs on the black market. However, it still managed to run without any problem.

“Come, my bed is this way.”

When she saw the metallic tables with white cloths, Xiao He’s fear was palpable. She knew what was under the white clothes. She was held tightly by the elder so she could only follow him. When they reached the center of the room, the elder pulled back the ‘sheet’ for one of the ‘beds’. “Lie down. After I cover you under the white cloth, you shall close your eyes and sleep. Don’t open your eyes, and don’t move.”

The elder held Xiao He’s wrist throughout. It was unclear if it was to stop Xiao He from running or if it was to protect her.

“Remember. Do not remove this tag no matter what.” After the elder covered Xiao He under the cloth, he removed the tag from his left leg and tied it to Xiao He.

“Uncle Ying...”

“Currently, ghosts roam this hospital. The most dangerous place is the safest place. I’ll come back when I find a safe exit.” The elder then disappeared like he was never there.

Xiao He didn’t dare to move. Her mind started to wander. Even now, she couldn’t tell if Uncle Ying was good or bad.

“I normally treat the patients like they’re like my family. They won’t harm me...” Xiao He comforted herself. Suddenly, she felt a tug at the edge of her white cloth. She turned, and she saw a strange creature. There was a dead body that was moving around with its bent four limbs. Its stomach was facing up.

“What is that?” The dead body’s stomach was cut open from the middle. The skin flaps opened like butterfly wings. It still had the human shape, but it wasn’t a human anymore.

There was a rustling sound. Xiao He held her breath until the monster left. She turned her head and saw a fatty kid around eight poke his head out of the 'bed' beside hers. He recognized Xiao He and gave her a smile.

"Zai Zai?" The boy's nickname was Zai Zai. He died three days ago due to bone cancer. Zai Zai winked at Xiao He, and he laid his remaining arm on his darkened lips, telling Xiao He to keep quiet.

Xiao He resisted the fear. But at that moment, she felt something crawling beside her. The body fluid dripped on the white cloth. The monster had returned, and it was reaching its head under Xiao He's white cloth!

At that moment, one of the other 'beds' shook, and the white cloth fell. A kind-looking and well-dressed old lady was lying on the cold metallic table. The monster beside Xiao He was triggered. It charged at the old lady like crazy. It opened its stomach to bite the old lady and then crawled deep into the morgue.

"Auntie Zhang?"

The old lady also died three days ago. Before she passed away, Xiao He was her nurse.

"Did she do that to save me?"

Chapter 709: Blessing

709 Blessing

Over the past two days, Xiao He had seen endless ghosts. They were cruel, crazy, and toyed with humans. The scariest thing was the humans they killed would be infected by the negative emotions and become killers too. Seeing the changes in the people around her, Xiao He was in deep despair. She had considered ending her life but every time there would be an accident. Now she realized those might not be accidents but 'coincidences' created by her 'patients'.

Lying on Uncle Ying's bed, Xiao He saw the monster slowly consume Auntie Zhang's body. Auntie Zhang normally cared about her appearance. Before she was gone, she winked at Xiao He, wishing her all the best. The farewell ended. Xiao He didn't get a chance to say anything, and Auntie Zhang disappeared into the monster's stomach. Auntie Zhang must have moved to protect Xiao He and Zai Zai. The old lady

with terminal cancer spent her last days in front of the mirror putting on makeup before she died. Her heart was as pretty as her appearance.

Xiao He suddenly didn't feel so scared. She hadn't done anything wrong with these patients. She was one of the few nurses who really cared about her patients. Now, her patients were trying to protect her.

'I wonder where the long corridor in the morgue leads. I remember Doctor Wang warning all of us from coming to the morgue.'

Soon, the morgue suddenly opened. More monsters crawled into the room. Their stomachs were biting many living people. 'What are they doing?' Xiao He looked through the gap. She noticed that all the people captured had the same property. They were all handsome, pretty, and had good physiques. 'They are not patients. The monsters probably kidnapped them from elsewhere. The hospital is their lair, and they have been going around the city to capture these other humans!' Xiao He believed that there was a very scary creature hiding at the hospital. This creature was different from the mindless ghosts. It could control and create monsters!

'No wonder Uncle Ying didn't lead me to the exit. If we had gone to the exit, we would have stumbled into the troop of monsters. These monsters are probably still patrolling the hospital.' Xiao He was afraid, and she was worried about Uncle Ying. The elder was famed for his kindness and his willingness to help others. The fact that he had been helping people could cause him to be targeted by vicious monsters. At that moment, Xiao He heard the sound of Doctor Wang, and she had a bad feeling. "Old fart, I've let you be since you've once helped me in the past. But don't blame me if you keep creating problems for me!"

"Wang Guiling! I was really blind in the past to help you comfort the patient's family! You're an animal! How could you steal organs from the patients?" Uncle Ying was loud like an angry lion.

"Scold me all you want. After I sacrifice your soul to God, you'll forget everything and become an obedient dog. You'll never face the pain of being human again." There was the sound of skin tearing. Xiao He's heart shook. She turned her head and looked out of the gap. Two nurses held Uncle Ying's arms. Doctor Wang gouged out a long gash on Uncle Ying's chest. Uncle Ying's rotting organs were exposed.

"It doesn't matter what kind of person you are before because your body will rot after death." Doctor Wang's eyes glowed with excitement when he saw the internal organs. He touched Uncle Ying's organs. "What's the point of being a good person? Do you think I'd let you go because you've once helped me?"

He held Uncle Ying's heart. "I thought a good person's heart would be red, but your heart is actually rotten too!"

"Wang Guiling, it doesn't matter if I die. At least I've lived a guiltless life, unlike you! You were nervous when you were alive, and you can't have peace after death! You deserve it!" Uncle Ying was not afraid. He was even smiling.

"Is that so?" Wang Guiling's face darkened. "You've helped so many people in the past. But in your hour of need, who is there to save you?" Wang Guiling was about to crush Uncle Ying's heart when he felt a bite on his calf. He lowered his head and saw Zai Zai biting his leg. Zai Zai only had one leg and one arm because of his bone cancer, but he was the first to rush to help.

"Zai Zai?" Uncle Ying's expression changed, and concern pooled in her eyes. When the boy heard Uncle Ying call his name, he looked up and smiled. He didn't fear Doctor Wang. This was the moment he felt truly alive.

"I should have amputated all four of your limbs!" Wang Guiling was furious. He stomped on Zai Zai's head.

Xiao He couldn't stand it anymore. She gripped her fists. When she pulled back the white cloth, all the white clothes in the morgue fell to the ground. All the dead patients sat up.

"Wh-what are you all doing?" Wang Guiling panicked. It was unclear who started it, but the patients rushed to attack Wang Guiling and the two nurses. They were pressed to the ground.

"How dare you resist when God is right underneath us?" Wang Guiling shouted. There was something hidden inside the two nurses. With a summon from Wang Guiling, their heads exploded and many butterflies flew out. The morgue shook. Blood spread on the ground like patterns on butterfly wings. The iron door of the morgue also started to close.

"Xiao He, you need to go! Run to the east side! The ghosts there have disappeared for some reason!" Uncle Ying worked with the other patients to push Xiao He out of the morgue. They stayed to stop the butterflies. Screams echoed inside the morgue. Xiao He knew she couldn't save everyone on her own. She gritted her teeth and ran down the eastern corridor.

“There should be others outside the hospital. I need to go get help!” Xiao He ran as fast as she could. However, a monster jumped out of the nurse’s station when she passed by. Its stomach opened and tried to eat Xiao He.

“Come! I’m not afraid of you!” Xiao He looked around but couldn’t find any suitable weapons. When she turned around, the monster had landed on its limbs and was rapidly crawling towards her!

Xiao He bit her lips until they bled. The despair of the past two days exploded, and Xiao He charged at the monster with a scream. Before she reached the monster, a bloated arm reached out of the hospital sewer. A water ghost crawled out. The monster jumped on the water ghost. Xiao He used this opening to run past the monster and down the corridor. She had no idea where she was going, but she trusted Uncle Ying. The monster didn’t waste too much time on the water ghost. It was attracted by Xiao He’s living body and soon turned to chase after her again.

Their distance drew closer. Xiao He couldn’t shake the monster off. She panicked. Just as she was about to be caught up, a few more living humans came from the other end of the corridor. The leading man held a hilt and wore a black suit. When Xiao He saw the man, she was worried. The monsters targeted handsome living humans, so this man would be targeted.

“Run!” She shouted at the group of living humans. But then she saw something shocking. A giant creature over 5 meters tall crushed through the walls and rampaged through the corridor.

“What monster is that?”

“Don’t be scared. It’s my pet.” The man saw Xiao He, and he was shocked. “Why do you have the blessing of more than ten ghosts? Are you the daughter of the Ghost King?”

Xiao He had no idea what the man was talking about.

“No. The presence came from the tag around your ankle. This is a very rare unique item!” The man and monster came forward. His eyes didn’t even notice the monsters with the open stomach. He focused on Xiao He. “My name is Han Fei. I’m a member of the citizen rescue group. Can you tell me who gave you this tag on your ankle?”

Chapter 710: Life And Death

710 Life and Death

When Xiao He saw Han Fei, she saw hope. But when she saw Big Sin a few seconds later, the hope was dashed. Xiao He, who had just escaped from the morgue, curled back. The tag was the last item Uncle Ying gave her.

“Don’t be afraid. I don’t look like a bad guy, right?” Han Fei smiled while holding the hilt. The blade cut through the night. He stabbed at the space beside Xiao He’s head. Han Fei’s knife cut at the monster behind Xiao He. Blood squirted around. When Xiao He turned around, the stomach monster had already been killed. Han Fei stood on the monster’s dead body with humanity’s glow shining on him.

“The reason the eastern corridor is safe is that you’ve killed all of the monsters?” Xiao He was afraid that the entire hospital had been corrupted, but Han Fei’s appearance had brought her light. “Are you here to save us?”

“I don’t think there’s anyone else in this city that is going around saving people other than me.” At that moment, the citizens who had been saved by Han Fei rushed into the corridor. They didn’t dare to stay too far from Han Fei. Most of them saw the video about Han Fei and knew his parents’ accusations about him. However, when they got to know Han Fei, they didn’t think the accusations were true. Han Fei always walked at the front of the group, and the other citizens were well protected. They could get inspiration and hope from Han Fei. The survivors looked at Han Fei, but Han Fei looked at the darkness. That was the biggest difference between them.

“What is the tag around your ankle? Who gave it to you?”

“These are body tags for the dead in the morgue. The person who gave me the tag is called Liu Yinxiong. Listen, even though he’s dead, he’s different from the other ghosts! He hasn’t harmed anyone and has been going around saving many innocent souls and people!” Xiao He hoped Han Fei could go and save Uncle Ying and the other patients in the morgue, so she explained everything clearly.

“I do wish to meet this ghost king.” Han Fei walked to the morgue. A giant butterfly pattern appeared on the door. The bloodstains formed a giant pair of butterfly wings. Dream appeared to have sped up his ritual because Han Fei kept disrupting them.

Big Sin smashed through the iron door. The morgue had become hell. All the patients who dared to resist were punctured. The colors in their souls faded. Their precious memories were stolen by Dream.

“Uncle Ying!” Xiao He saw the elder. The elder was dragged away by the stomach monster and then disappeared.

“Was the old man the owner of the tag?” Uncle Ying didn’t fit Han Fei’s imagination of the Ghost King, but he did sense a cryptic world presence on Uncle Ying. Perhaps the normal cryptic world wasn’t only filled with despair.

With Xu Qin and Big Sin’s help, Han Fei soon took over the morgue. The monsters and ghosts were fed to the unique citizens. Normal ghosts wouldn’t help Big Sin, and Xu Qin needed black flames of Pure Hatred.

“Why is your hospital’s morgue so big?” Han Fei had been to many hospitals and morgues.

“There’s another underground floor. Normally, our department head bans us from going there.”

“Is your department head still alive?” Han Fei needed more clues.

Xiao He looked around and pointed at a pool of blood by the door. “There he is.”

Using Soul-depth Touch, Han Fei searched the pool of blood. He confirmed that Doctor Wang was gone. “It looks like we have to depend on ourselves.” Han Fei waved, and Zhao Gu and Shan Shan walked out of the crowd. They started to have their families consume the monsters and save the innocent patients.

“Seeing the patients here, I see hope. At least some of the ghosts are willing to help maintain the peace of the world.” Han Fei opened the door deep inside the morgue. He had Big Sin lead the way. He and Yan Yue walked behind it.

Yan Yue was surprised that Han Fei could reach this step. The young man had brought her so much surprise. This was the first time she felt a living person could challenge the powerful theme park managers.

“Why is Dream collecting so many living bodies? Based on our collected information, this hospital has been dealing with the organ trade. Dream has taken over the hospital director and most of the managers. It offered them immortality for them to work for it...” Han Fei was not an idiot. Once he entered the hospital, he started to gather information. In this chaotic age, the sins of the private hospital were nothing anymore. The monsters stopped hiding in the shadows. They crawled out and started to kidnap the living humans.

“Dream has prepared eight different bodies for eight different rituals. The water monster in the Sea of Brain represents extreme sin, ugliness, and tragedy. The rituals here represent endless potential and future. This hospital is the center for Dream to conduct human experiments. It wants to create the perfect human body.” Yan Yue’s mother stopped hiding anything. She was a clever person, and she’d side with whoever had the highest winning chance.

“He’s trying to create the perfect human body?! Is something wrong with Dream? Does it think humans are jigsaw puzzles?” To create the perfect human, Fu Sheng and Fu Tian were more acceptable. They exhausted decades to study the human body, while Dream approached this in a monstrous way.

“What it wants is not human organs but to inject part of it into different human organs for cultivation. When the time is right, it will shape its body back together.”

“Until now, you haven’t told me what kind of existence is Dream. Can you describe it for me?” Han Fei was intrigued by Dream. Dream was the manager back in his age, and it was already an Unmentionable. Yan Yue’s mother shook her head.

“Alright. I won’t force you. When I find the chance, I’ll have Big Sin consume Dream before you so that you won’t fear it anymore.”

The path led down. Han Fei started to hear children crying. This hidden basement had many babies.

“Newborns?” Han Fei frowned. Dream wouldn’t be above using babies.

“Do you still remember what I told you? There are two rituals in this hospital.” Yan Yue’s mother told the truth. “One of them is to find all the organs scattered across the city. That ritual is a backup for Dream. It was afraid that it might be discovered by the other managers, so it kept dissecting its own

body. As long as a person in the city still has parts of Dream's body inside them, then Dream will still be alive."

"What about the other ritual?"

"The other ritual is added by Dream later on. While it took away the humans' organs and health, it witnessed not only humans' fear of death but also the glow of humanity. Before death, people would have different attitudes. Even at the end of their lives, some people would bloom like flowers. That was something even death couldn't take away. These beautiful moments intrigued Dream. It wanted to use these most beautiful souls to create a new body."

Yan Yue's mother glanced at Rest in Peace.

"But what does that have to do with newborns?"

"Even the prettiest colors need a clean canvas."

The beautiful souls were the paint, and the newborns were the canvas. Dream had done everything for the resurrection ritual. "Eight rituals with eight different methods. It has even prepared eight bodies. No wonder Fu Sheng and the other managers still can't fully kill Dream."

With the babies crying, Han Fei's group entered the deep part of the morgue. Han Fei was greeted by the most absurd scene. Under the morgue, there was a large birthing room. Death and life were only one floor away.

"Haven't I said that no one is allowed entry without my permission?!" A gloomy voice said. It boomed and caused Han Fei's ears to vibrate. Han Fei's eyebrows rose as he turned to the voice. Other than the morgue and the birthing room, there was a human organ factory. After the humans were captured here, they became a raw material. They lost their names, ages, and humanity. The suitable materials would stay and enter the next stage. If they passed multiple stages, they would become hosts for parts of Dream. Those who failed the filtration would be sent to another passage when they'd be made into stomach monsters.

“So those monsters were once humans!” Xiao Jia covered his eyes. “The monsters captured humans to turn them into monsters. There is no monster, to begin with. They were once humans. This is an endless tragic cycle.”

“You’re right.” Han Fei patted Big Sin’s light. “The cycle is repeating, but someone will be there to break the cycle.” Big Sin charged toward the organ factory. All the sins were destroyed.

“Who’s there? Come out now!” The gloomy voice said again. All the machines in the organ factory stopped. A man who had multiple butterfly tattoos on his body walked out of the machines. His flesh was connected to the machines. His blood vessels were the machine wires.

The back of his head was hollowed. A black cocoon sat inside. Different from the other cocoon, something had already grown out of this cocoon. Its lower body was inside the cocoon, but its upper body had stuck into the man’s brain.

“Hospital director?” When Xiao He saw the man, she was shocked. Her most respected mentor was actually the source of all the tragedies!

“It was you who led them here! You should die! I should have kicked you underground on your first day of work!” The man slowly moved forward. The machines combined with him started to twist. He seemed to drag the whole factory as he moved.

“Dream always makes some strange creatures.” Yan Yue’s mother was disgusted. The normal citizens didn’t even dare to look anymore. “I will turn all of you into presents for God!”

The hospital director sensed the terrifying presence of Big Sin. The blood vessels on his body burst. A group of stomach monsters crawled out of the factory. They flew at Han Fei like mutated butterflies. However, Han Fei didn’t need to do anything with Big Sin there. It could deal with the whole hospital on its own.

“Dream has been meaning to cultivate extreme evil and tragedy. I bet it has no idea that a kind person like me would breed Big Sin.” Han Fei thought it was funny. Then again, the human cocoons he got all first came from Happiness Neighborhood. Butterfly probably didn’t lose them, but Fu Sheng had caught them and kept them at Happiness Neighborhood.

Fu Sheng had not directly helped Han Fei, but he left a lot of stuff for Han Fei. If Han Fei could make use of them, it was fine. It was better if Han Fei didn't use them because then Fu Sheng would revive using Han Fei's body and reclaim his stuff.

Han Fei had been observing the hospital director. When the director's focus was on Big Sin, Han Fei sneaked to hide behind Big Sin. When the hospital director came close enough, he showed the butcher's knife.