

Collapse 109

Chapter 109: The Mourning Hall with much Wailing and Weeping_1

On the second floor, just as Fatty switched on his flashlight, preparing to find the light switch in the study, all the lights in the corridor abruptly extinguished without warning.

From a nearby room, a woman's shriek echoed. Gu Mian recognized it as Xiao Zhang's voice.

Immediately after, he heard two sets of footsteps rush out from the neighboring room as the couple dashed into the corridor.

Just as Gu Mian saw two figures run out, Fatty, who was holding the flashlight, suddenly let out a strange cry, "Huh?"

Initially, Fatty had been startled by the sudden power outage. However, having experienced quite a few bizarre events by now, an unexpected power failure didn't frighten him too much.

But just as he had calmed himself, the scene before him gave him another shock.

A typical household's bookshelves would be crammed with books to make a good showing. Even if not entirely full, there would be at least one or two for appearance's sake.

But this study was quite different from a typical one.

It seemed to have a mind of its own, apparently having no desire to put on a show, or even to pretend.

There wasn't a single book on the bookshelves in this study.

Things that should have been there were absent, while some things that shouldn't have been there were present.

A huge sheet of white paper was stuck to one of the bookshelves. It was perfectly square, about a meter in length and width, with a giant, black, printed character on it.

Without even looking closely, Gu Mian recognized it. It was a large, black, printed character typically associated with funerals.

Black character on white paper.

A crack in the study window let in a breeze, causing the huge sheet of paper to flutter and rustle.

Throughout his life, Gu Mian had seen many places that would make people wail and cry out—to put it plainly, funeral parlors.

Whenever someone closed their eyes for the last time, never to open them again, they would be wrapped in a blanket or something similar, with only a patch of dark hair or a bald scalp showing, and then taken in a vehicle to the funeral home.

Cremation, ashes boxed, and finally, placement in a funeral parlor.

Then, the large funereal character would be posted in the center of the funeral parlor, signifying the end of a person's life.

Fatty clearly hadn't expected to see such an eerie symbol of death as soon as he opened the door. He froze for a moment, then craned his neck to observe the rest of the study.

Fatty, not seeing anything else unusual, backed away a few steps, his flashlight beam unsteady. "Doctor," he asked, "has someone died here?"

Why else would such an ominous character be posted here?

"Don't forget, this is a Mysterious Dungeon," Gu Mian said, rubbing his chin. "It's impossible that no one has died here."

The question is, who died? Did Zhao Lei know the deceased?

At that moment, the couple from the next room ran over, likely having seen the flashlight beam from this direction.

Mingliang, still shaken, looked at Gu Mian. "Doctor, do you know what happened...?"

He stopped mid-sentence, clearly having seen the large funereal character in the study.

Mingliang stared at the eerie black character on the white paper and swallowed hard. "What is this... Did someone die here?"

Before Gu Mian could answer, the lights overhead flickered twice and then came back on.

Then, Gu Mian heard the sound of a door opening downstairs.

He had no time to answer Mingliang's question and hurried down the stairs to look into the hall.

He saw Zhao Lei standing in front of his room with a strange expression. Zhao Lei had apparently opened his door at some unknown point.

However, the doors to Brother Mobile's and Chu Changge's rooms remained tightly shut.

But in the next second, Chu Changge's door was pushed open from the inside, revealing an impassive face, as if he had been asleep in his room, completely unaware of what had transpired.

Brother Mobile, however, had not appeared.

Fatty, who had followed Gu Mian down the stairs, also noticed something was wrong. "Speaking of which, why hasn't that guy come out...?"

He's probably dead, Gu Mian thought, but didn't say it aloud. He quickly approached Brother Mobile's door.

"Are you in there?" Gu Mian knocked.

At this point, Zhao Lei and Chu Changge also walked over from their respective rooms.

Zhao Lei looked at them, puzzled. "Did the power trip just now?"

Mingliang shook his head sheepishly. "I don't know either."

He was clearly still thinking about the eerie funereal character in the study.

While the two were talking, Gu Mian knocked on Brother Mobile's door again, this time a little harder, but there was still no response from inside.

He then tried turning the doorknob, but the door seemed to be locked from the inside; it wouldn't open.

"What's going on?" Fatty frowned. "Why did he lock the door from the inside?"

That wasn't something a normal person would do. Everyone knew this was a Mysterious Dungeon. Although they were afraid of something entering from outside, people usually wouldn't have the courage to lock the door from the inside in this situation.

Unless he wanted an undisturbed brawl with a ghost, but apart from Gu Mian, no one else would dare to do such a thing.

While Fatty was still confused, Zhao Lei suddenly spoke, "He asked to borrow a pen from me, then went back to his room. Not long after, the power went out."

"A pen?" Gu Mian repeated.

Zhao Lei nodded. "Yeah, an erasable pen, the kind that can remove ink. I remember buying it when I was in elementary school. I don't know why he borrowed it."

The mention of an erasable pen made everyone understand.

Brother Mobile had a sheet of paper he'd found in his room, covered in large stains. Presumably, he wanted to try and remove the stains with the erasable pen.

It seemed he had successfully discovered something, Gu Mian thought, looking at the door. "Let's break it open."

Although the building was old, the door was quite sturdy. Fortunately, they had Fatty, and also Mingliang, who had poured all his Attribute Points into strength.

The two of them joined forces and rammed Brother Mobile's door. After a few attempts, the fairly sturdy door crashed open.

Gu Mian glanced inside; the room was completely empty.

"Where is he?" Mingliang exclaimed in surprise.

Never mind a person, there wasn't even the shadow of a ghost. Brother Mobile seemed to have vanished into thin air within this room.

This room couldn't hide anyone.

A bed—you could see under it at a glance—with some old toys beneath.

A very small desk, with an erasable pen on it—presumably the one Brother Mobile had borrowed from Zhao Lei.

Apart from these, there was nothing else.

If one had to count it, the large window directly opposite the door could also be considered. It was huge, so the room had excellent natural light.

But at night, it was impossible to tell how good the natural light was. Outside, it was pitch black. The ceiling light in the room was still on, and the stunned expressions of the others, reflected in the glass, looked somewhat comical.

Although players didn't truly die when they "died" in an instance, their "bodies" would still remain at the location of death, presumably to inform others that "this player has died."

But Brother Mobile had vanished without a trace, neither alive nor dead to be found; it was completely unknown where he had gone.

Moreover, the piece of paper he had, which might have contained clues, had also disappeared.