

Collapse 114

Chapter 114: Watching a Movie [Third Update]_1

Escaping from the main building did not mean escaping from Terror Manor.

A few people vanished into thin air, leaving no trace behind.

The clock was running backwards.

Based on the information at hand, Gu Mian felt that the second hypothesis was more likely.

Fatty, feeling disoriented, asked, "So Brother Chu might have already left the novel?"

Gu Mian cast him a glance. "I was just making a comparison. Have you ever seen a clock run backwards in a novel? We may not be in a novel, but possibly inside something else."

As he spoke, he fiddled with the row of vertical buttons on his phone. "Nine oh two..."

Fatty, shining his flashlight, sounded unsure. "Doctor, why do I always feel like you've figured something out?"

Gu Mian looked up. "That still needs to be tested. Let's check the disc first."

They had arrived in front of Fatty's room.

Since this appeared to be the room Zhao Lei had used in middle school, everything inside was very reminiscent of student life—except for a few articles of clothing in the wardrobe that reeked of a strong alternative fashion vibe.

"By the way, didn't Zhao Lei say his father never gave him extra money? Where did he get the money to buy these clothes?" Fatty peered into the wardrobe.

If nothing else, that leather jacket looked expensive.

Though it was clearly cheap imitation leather, for a family like theirs, buying this jacket would still be considered a luxury.

Gu Mian was currently prying open the CD tray on the computer tower.

This junk computer didn't have a keyboard, nor could he find a power cord. Without power, it was impossible to eject the tray with a button.

Gu Mian had no choice but to pry it open manually. Even though the junk computer couldn't be powered on, he figured he'd put the disc in and try anyway.

He applied a bit of force, and the tray finally budged open by a centimeter. Gu Mian immediately grabbed it, pulled the entire tray out, placed the CD on it, and then slammed the tray shut.

Done in one smooth motion.

Fatty watched from the side. "Doctor, you've watched quite a few of these discs in your time, haven't you?"

"Stop messing around," Gu Mian shot him a look. "Watch the screen."

Fatty sheepishly turned to the screen, only to see the unpowered computer miraculously light up after the disc was inserted.

This should have been a bizarre event, but in a Mysterious Dungeon, it seemed less out of place.

The disc contained a video recording.

It was less like a recording and more like surveillance footage, similar to what you would find in a school.

The camera must have been on the ceiling, as the scene on the screen was shot from above. In the center of the screen was a large door, a type Gu Mian had seen often during his school days; it was the kind of shared office door used by many teachers.

The screen cast a faint glow in the darkness. Fatty curiously stuck his head forward, his large face almost touching the screen.

Gu Mian pushed his head back. "Careful, a hand might reach out from inside and pull you in."

Upon hearing this, Fatty quickly retreated a few steps in fear.

There was no timestamp displayed on the video, but Gu Mian guessed it must have been dinnertime.

The corridor was empty, and it was getting dark. The students should have gone to the canteen or back to their dormitories.

There was a strip of glass on the office door, through which several teachers could be seen eating food they had brought from the canteen in plastic bags.

A few other teachers had even brought a pot and were gathered around an electric rice cooker, cooking something.

The scene remained quiet for several minutes until a loud shout shattered the peace.

"Teacher!"

Fatty nearly jumped at the shout.

He had thought it was a silent film. The sudden sound made his heart skip a beat.

"What's up with that? There aren't even any speakers..." Fatty clutched his chest.

But he didn't complain further and turned his serious attention back to the screen.

"Teacher..."

A group of students in school uniforms dashed up the stairs and barged straight into the office without even knocking.

They frantically said something to one of the teachers inside. The teacher then shot up as if his pants were on fire, rushed out of the office, and ran towards the stairs. A few other teachers followed them out, but not in such a hurry, instead clustering near the doorway to discuss something.

After a while, Gu Mian saw the teacher who had rushed out return. Trailing behind him was a silent boy in a school uniform.

The boy had his head lowered, but they immediately recognized him. It was Zhao Lei.

"What the hell?" Fatty exclaimed in surprise. "This plot seems a bit familiar."

Zhao Lei had told them about it; this must have been the fight he was involved in.

In the video, Zhao Lei, head hanging low, followed the teacher into the office. Their voices were quiet, and Gu Mian could only catch a few words.

"Fighting... parents, dean..."

"Expulsion..."

Zhao Lei seemed to sob a few times, then shook his head desperately.

The teacher sighed, said something to him, then picked up his phone.

Then Zhao Lei, head still drooped, slowly walked out of the office and stood against the nearby wall, as if he were being made to stand there as punishment.

By this time, the students had finished their meals and were trickling back to their classrooms for the evening self-study session.

Zhao Lei stood at the office doorway, his head buried low.

Passing students would glance at him curiously. Some would whisper as they walked by, exchange a few words, then look up at Zhao Lei—obviously gossiping about him.

A few boys stood not far off, huddled together, looking at Zhao Lei while pointing and muttering.

Watching the screen, Gu Mian and Fatty could vaguely make out a few phrases:

"Compensation..."

"I heard his dad's a real cheapskate..."

"Poor loser."

At this, Zhao Lei buried his head even lower.

Waves of students passed by, all, without exception, casting looks at him that were either curious as if watching a spectacle, or openly scornful. Before long, Gu Mian saw a stout, burly man appear on the screen.

The man clearly ate well; his neck was almost as thick as his head. He seemed to have rushed, climbing the stairs breathlessly before barging into the office.

The man seemed to yell a few curses inside the office, then strode out, pointed at Zhao Lei's nose, and began to berate him loudly.

"So it was you who broke my son's nose? You little beast!"

"If anything happens to my son... you just wait and see! Pah!"

"Who the hell do you think you are!"

The man looked like he wanted to get physical but restrained himself, merely standing in front of Zhao Lei and continuing to curse.

A few teachers came out to hold the man back. Zhao Lei's homeroom teacher, it seemed, was frantically making call after call, as if no one was picking up on the other end.

After several more tries, the call was finally answered.

By now, Zhao Lei, standing nearby, had burst into loud sobs. Only then did the man's cursing quiet down a little.

The homeroom teacher said a few words into the phone, hung up, and quickly walked over to Zhao Lei, intending to lead him away.

But the man relentlessly grabbed Zhao Lei's arm. "Trying to leave? Who said you could go? Huh? Who said you could go?"

As he spoke, he tried to drag Zhao Lei towards the stairs. "You dare hit my precious son? Today, we're both going to the station! Mark my words, if I get you in there today, you're not coming out!"

Seeing things were getting out of hand, several teachers quickly intervened, forcefully separating the two.

The homeroom teacher seized the opportunity to quickly lead Zhao Lei away.

The man, surrounded by a group of teachers, continued to curse incessantly.

Only when Zhao Lei's figure completely disappeared from the surveillance footage did the man's voice diminish somewhat.

"It's just like Zhao Lei said," Fatty sighed. "The other kid's dad came and tore into him, but his own father is nowhere to be found..."

And just at this moment, Gu Mian noticed a small, thin figure suddenly appear on the stairs.

The thin figure shot up the stairs like lightning. He paused, glanced around, and then spotted the man in the middle of the circle of teachers, still cursing profusely.

The man in the center of the teachers evidently recognized the newcomer who had just rushed up. He spat and said, "So you're that little bastard's father? My son told me about you. Sired a son but don't bother to raise him, and you're poor as dirt."

"Got a father to sire him, but not one to raise him. No wonder he's such a coward, only dares to bully my son. When I yell at him, he doesn't even dare to look up!"

"Motherfucker!" the thin man suddenly roared, then charged forward. "You think you can just badmouth my son like that?"