

Collapse 118

Chapter 118: Pufa Mall_1

It was just for an instant.

Gu Mian noticed the living room clock return to normal for a brief moment, but then it immediately mirrored and began to flow backward again. The change lasted a mere two seconds, easily missed by anyone not paying close attention.

Gu Mian paused for a moment, then looked back. He saw Fatty still staring with a curious expression at the phone, from which sounds continuously emanated.

But Xiao Zhang had vanished without a trace.

Someone had disappeared.

Time reverted to normal for two seconds, and in that brief window, someone vanished.

Perhaps because it was so dark, Fatty didn't notice immediately. By the time he registered Gu Mian's strange gaze and understood what had happened, it was already too late.

"Huh?" Fatty asked, staring at the spot where Xiao Zhang should have been standing. "Where did he go? Such a big man..."

To vanish into thin air like that was simply too eerie.

"The ghost here seems capable of pulling players out of the World in the Mirror," Gu Mian began. "That's why the previous few disappeared out of nowhere."

"But I believe the ghost's ability is limited. It can pull individuals out of the World in the Mirror, but it seems unable to choose who specifically gets pulled."

Gu Mian said while watching the reversed clock, "During those few seconds when the clock was normal, I believe we were all pulled out of the World in the Mirror."

"My guess is that if the ghost wants to pull someone out of the World in the Mirror, it must first pull everyone in the building out. Then, it kicks anyone it hasn't chosen back into the World in the Mirror."

"Also, have you noticed that every time someone disappears, the power cuts out?" Gu Mian asked, looking up at the electric light.

The building's lights were also ancient and looked like they could fail at any second.

Fatty pondered for a moment before a look of sudden realization crossed his face. "So, the power outage is to obstruct our view? To keep us from noticing that, for a moment, everything around us inverted?"

Gu Mian nodded. "That's more or less its purpose."

The entire building would suddenly lose power, and in that instant, all players would be pulled out of the World in the Mirror.

With the surroundings plunged into darkness after the power outage, the players would naturally panic, probably not noticing that for a moment everything around them had inverted.

If a player managed to run out of the main entrance in that instant, they would likely have completed the task.

That would count as a true escape from Terror Manor.

In the darkness, Fatty moved closer to Gu Mian. "So, Doctor... Xiao Zhang was taken by the ghost, right?"

Gu Mian nodded. "It's clear this ghost is trying to separate us."

Having lived as long as he had, he'd naturally seen his fair share of horror movies.

In most horror films, ghosts usually engaged in one-on-one confrontations. They typically targeted those who were alone; Gu Mian had never seen a ghost attack, for instance, a group of aunties square dancing late at night.

So, this ghost had likely pulled Xiao Zhang out for a one-on-one confrontation.

"In this instance, what we players can do is uncover the truth. The ghost here, however, aims to separate and kill the players, taking any clues along with them."

"It's evident this ghost is extremely reluctant to let us find the truth. I suspect Zhao Lei's recurring amnesia is also connected to this ghost."

"I estimate that the closer we get to the truth, the more frenzied the ghost in this house will become."

Hearing Gu Mian's analysis, Fatty edged a few steps closer, afraid of being snatched away by the ghost if he wasn't vigilant.

He asked hesitantly, "So, Doctor, how far are we from the truth now?"

Gu Mian glanced at him. "Just a few steps away."

That's extremely dangerous! Fatty shivered involuntarily.

Meanwhile, the eerie phone in Gu Mian's hand continued to emit sounds, and he listened intently.

"Brother Li, you have to help me find some work. My son's about to start junior high, the money my old man left me is almost gone, and I have to pay his tuition."

"I can find you work, but the pay probably won't be great. You know your own reputation—you're unskilled, getting on in years and couldn't even find a wife yourself; your father had to arrange one for you, and then what happened with your wife..."

Perhaps realizing he had said too much, Brother Li quickly changed his tune.

"Look, you've achieved nothing by forty. Honestly, if you were a boss, would you want to hire an employee with no work experience, a terrible reputation, who often gets drunk and makes a scene outside the supermarket? This is a small town; word gets around. Everyone knows your business."

"Old Zhao, I'll be honest with you. Don't you dare complain about the low pay for those jobs I found you. If I hadn't put in a good word for you, they wouldn't have even considered hiring you."

Zhao Guanhai was silent for two seconds. "Brother Li, do you know where I can find a high-paying job?"

Brother Li laughed. "High paying? Just flip through the criminal code; all the most lucrative jobs are listed in there."

He paused, then continued, "I just don't get it. The jobs I find for you, the pay's never good enough. I know the salary isn't high, but if you save up, it'll be enough for tuition, won't it? Why do you insist on needing so much money? How much can you and your son possibly spend?"

"I need to save for his middle school, high school, and university tuition. And when my son gets married in the future, I'll need money for the bride price. I have to save every penny I can so he doesn't end up like me, unable to hold his head high."

Brother Li fell silent for a moment. "Alright, I'll do my best to look for something for you. But if you're really set on making more money, I can point you in one direction."

"Just as long as it's not something that'll get me thrown in jail."

"What are you thinking? There's a labor market next to Pufa Mall. Everyone there does back-breaking manual labor. If you think you're up for it, go take a look. But I'm warning you, the work there is truly inhumane—it's not fit for humans."