

Collapse 132

Chapter 132: Viewing the Road through the Scalp is Most Deadly_1

The driver seemed to be startled by Gu Mian.

Her face stiff, she asked, "What's wrong?"

Gu Mian felt the wind blowing from afar, then tightened his white coat. "Nothing, I just forgot to bring my wallet."

As he spoke, he took two steps forward, opened the car door, and sat in the back seat of the taxi.

The driver, mouth agape, seemed to want to say something, but Gu Mian moved too fast and sat down in the back seat before she could utter a word.

Seeing him get in, the driver, a moment too late, finally spoke, "This time you can ride for free, or you can pay next time... Actually, you can put your guitar in the trunk."

By now, Gu Mian had already unstrapped his guitar and set it on the seat next to him. "No, I think my guitar is safer with me."

The driver pursed her lips slightly, seemingly unwilling to waste more words. She turned back to face forward. "Where are you going?"

Gu Mian glanced at the map in his hand. "Rong'an Residential Area."

Then he saw the driver pause slightly, but she didn't say anything more and started the taxi in silence.

Gu Mian had roughly calculated the distance from here to the Rong'an Residential Area.

He was now in a remote location northwest of Yecheng City, which was considered the suburbs, while Rong'an Residential Area was on the eastern side of the city. Even by car, it would take over an hour to arrive.

Strangely, there seemed to be no living people in this city.

The taxi passed several apartment buildings, but there wasn't a single lit window in sight.

Gu Mian knew that it was a bit much to expect people to have their lights on in the dead of night, but the city indeed looked deserted, as if it were an empty city built exclusively for the players entering this instance.

A fierce wind battered the car's body, the sound alone making one feel cold.

The taxi was dark inside, so Gu Mian used the light from the streetlamps outside to check the date in the top left corner of the advertisement in his hand—July 30th.

Logically, the weather at the end of July shouldn't be this cold. The outside temperature felt like late autumn, and the wind was chilling enough to make one shiver.

The driver had now passed two intersections and was waiting for the green light at a third.

This intersection was desolate, with only their car present, surrounded by eerie darkness. The traffic light overhead seemed somewhat illusory.

So far, the driver's behavior wasn't much different from that of a regular person—except for her age, which was unusual for the profession, and her body, which trembled subtly but strangely.

Gu Mian looked at the car's interior rearview mirror.

From this angle, he could see the driver's face.

Her young face had turned deathly pale, looking particularly unsettling under the illumination of the streetlights.

"Speaking of which..." Gu Mian suddenly began.

The driver quickly asked, "What?"

Aside from her deathly pale face, her tone and movements were no different from a normal person's.

Gu Mian noticed the driver suddenly lowered her head, preventing him from observing her pale face in the rearview mirror.

He cleared his throat lightly. "Speaking of which, you must have been driving here for a while now, right?"

The driver, head still bowed, mumbled an affirmative.

Gu Mian then asked, "Have you heard of any famous supernatural incidents here? For example, people disappearing after getting into a taxi?"

The briefing for this instance was very clear: Yecheng City had stories of people vanishing without a trace after hailing a taxi.

And the missing person notice on the advertisement also indicated this.

The green light came on, and the taxi started moving slowly again. Gu Mian detected a strange, faint, and barely perceptible odor in the air.

With her head still bowed, the driver responded, "I've heard..."

Before Gu Mian could inquire further, she continued:

"Four people have disappeared here, all after getting into a taxi—three men and one woman.

"I don't know if those who disappeared all took the same taxi; I only know that no one has seen them since. Alive, they're missing; dead, their bodies are unfound...

"I'm not sure about the others, but I do know the first to disappear was a female college student. Her parents searched for her for more than ten years. They sold their house and rented a previously-occupied one across from mine.

"I know they were always saving money. The rent in our residential area isn't the cheapest; I don't know why they chose to live there.

"When I was young, I'd see them leave before dawn with a canister of pre-printed missing person flyers, often not returning until late at night.

"When I was little, I liked to peek outside through the peephole. Every time I heard someone coming upstairs, I would climb up to watch...

"I often saw her mother come home first to cook. About an hour later, once it was completely dark, her father would return, hunched over, carrying a canister, as he climbed the stairs.

"I often saw him squat by the door and cry softly for a while. The sound was so faint, almost inaudible. Then he would stand up, find his keys, and open the door.

"Sometimes I'd ask my parents, 'What if I disappeared like the older sister across the street?' They'd always say that wouldn't happen...

"Later, I saw less and less of the older sister's parents. I heard her mother fell ill, and they gave up the rental. Nobody knows where they went."

Gu Mian looked at the missing person notice on the advertisement in his hand, then at the date in the top left corner again.

The college student, Lin Rongrong, disappeared on July 24, 2002.

From what the driver said, more than ten years had already passed; it was at least 2012, possibly even later.

Gu Mian looked out the car window and saw a phone booth by the roadside ahead.

He turned to the driver again. "What month is it now?"

The driver seemed dazed for a moment before responding, "Almost October... I remember it should be almost October..." The most update novels are published on novel_fire.net

Gu Mian looked at the driver, her head still bowed. "Stop at the phone booth ahead. I need to get out."

The driver's bangs stirred slightly, as if she wanted to lift her head, but ultimately, she didn't. "You'd better not get out now. It's not safe."

"And you think it's safe for you to drive looking at the road with your scalp?"

"..."

The taxi stopped by the roadside.

Gu Mian got out with his chainsaw, stood by the driver's window, and looked at the top of her head.

Her head was bowed so low that her face was invisible unless he looked up from below.

Looking at her scalp, Gu Mian said, "One last question: what's your name?"

The driver's bangs fluttered slightly, and then a barely audible voice said, "Liu Mo. My name is Liu Mo."

Immediately, she slammed on the accelerator, and the taxi sped off, leaving Gu Mian eating dust.

Gu Mian didn't mind the mouthfuls of dust he'd swallowed. He muttered to himself, "The first disappearance was in 2002, and by 2012, the number of missing persons had reached four."

It was probable that in this instance, far more than four people had vanished after getting into a taxi, and this Liu Mo was very likely one of them.

Considering her age, it was too strange for her to be a night-shift taxi driver.

Liu Mo had likely been detained here by some mysterious force after her disappearance and forced to become a driver.

"So, the drivers we players get matched with are likely the people who disappeared back then," he mused.

"But these drivers seem harmless. It feels like I could get home safely just by sitting in the car." Gu Mian stroked his chin. "Or maybe it's just me who thinks they're harmless?"

As he thought this, he slipped into the nearby phone booth and pressed the "Call Taxi" button again.

This time, a man answered the phone.