

Collapse 18

Chapter 18: Welcoming One Thousand Favorites_1

A room of about twenty square meters, roughly the size of a slightly larger bedroom.

In the very center stood a coffin, surrounded by densely packed funeral wreaths. Elegiac couplets were hung upon them—

"Solemnly mourning Mr. Liu's eternal passing. Respectfully presented by your junior, Zhang Han."

Above the coffin, in the middle of the wall, hung a huge black-and-white photograph. The man in the photo was smiling down at them.

"It's a bit scary," Fireworks Can Be Cold shivered.

Gu Mian took out the test questions to look at them, then glanced up at the mourning hall. The two seemed completely unrelated.

He pondered, Could it be that we have to lift the coffin lid to take a look?

The only possible clue now seemed to be inside the coffin. However, the coffin was clearly made of solid wood, and its lid was very heavy, not easily moved.

Never mind. Gu Mian rolled up his sleeves. "Who's going to help me move this coffin lid?"

"Move it?" Fireworks Can Be Cold immediately retreated three large steps, as if he couldn't believe his ears.

Gu Mian repeated, "Yes, move it. If you want to pass, that is."

Scoring at least eighty points to pass the written test was genuinely difficult.

Fatty trembled for a moment, then composed himself and moved closer to the coffin.

Chu Changge also moved over.

Fireworks Can Be Cold had already shrunk back to the doorway. "I'm a bit scared. You guys move it; I'll watch from here."

Hao Laoshi and the freckled girl, Meteor Princess, also retreated to the doorway, looking very frightened.

Whatever. It wasn't as if he had expected much from these people from the start.

Just as the three of them were rolling up their sleeves, preparing to commit this disrespectful act towards their ancestors, Xiao Qiao suddenly approached.

"Let me help too," she said, reaching out and giving the lid a hefty push. "I'm really strong."

With a small frame like yours, how much strength could you possibly have?

However, Gu Mian didn't send her away. After all, there's a saying: "There's strength in numbers," right?

And even if that saying wasn't quite right, wasn't there another one: "Men and women working together, the work isn't tiring"?

"On the count of three, let's all push together," Gu Mian said, resting his hand on the coffin lid.

The others nodded.

It had to be said, Xiao Qiao's strength was indeed immense. The three grown men barely had to exert any effort before she single-handedly pushed the coffin lid askew.

This scene left Fatty so astonished his jaw dropped. "Miss, did you put all your Attribute Points into strength?"

Xiao Qiao laughed heartily. "I was just born strong."

By this time, Gu Mian had already peered into the coffin and scanned its interior.

It was completely empty. There was nothing inside.

No corpse, nothing else at all. In short, they had moved the coffin lid for nothing.

Fatty was a bit disheartened. "Why don't we check other rooms?"

Gu Mian thought, Alright, and walked out of the room.

Only then did he notice the light in the center of the main hall had gone out at some point. Only a faint glow illuminated the central table, where a round clock showed it was now 6:20.

A few steps to the side led to the next door.

A funeral portrait was also hung on the door, about a person's height up, looking quite eerie.

Gu Mian reached out and pushed open the door.

The scene behind the door wasn't much different from the previous room.

All had a large funeral portrait, an enormous coffin, crowded funeral wreaths, and elegiac couplets hung on the wreaths.

However, the content of the elegiac couplets was different; after all, the names of the deceased were different.

He figured all the rooms on this floor were probably identical. He wondered if the second and third floors would be the same.

Gu Mian looked at the faces in the funeral portraits and rubbed his forehead. "I guess the answer we're looking for is in a coffin, but we have to find the right coffin first."

Opening the coffins one by one was clearly impractical. Their exam time was from ten to twelve o'clock, meaning they couldn't answer any more questions after twelve.

If they really opened them one by one, they would run out of time.

Gu Mian glanced at his driving test paper. "My test paper says there's one Evil Ghost on each of the three floors. First, we need to find the one on this floor."

But how to find it was a major problem.

To tell the truth, before this game descended, Gu Mian had fantasized about countless apocalyptic scenarios.

He'd imagined alien invasions of Earth, zombie virus outbreaks, a resurgence of ghostly energy, a global nuclear leak creating countless monsters... But no matter the fantasy, it always ended in a game of chase.

Monsters chase, he runs.

Or perhaps he chases, and the monsters run.

But things were different now. The Evil Ghost on the first floor was hidden so thoroughly that forget it chasing them, even catching a glimpse of it was a challenge.

Now, he had to rack his brains to find this ghost. Ideals and reality were truly worlds apart.

Feeling mentally drained, Gu Mian found a funeral wreath, laid it on the floor, and plopped down onto it. The wreath emitted a fragile CRACKLING sound. "Let's make a plan. A ghost-hunting plan."

"First, we must split up. Don't ask me whose head we're splitting—you figure that part out yourselves."

"Second, to pass the exam, we have to find these ghosts. In fact, each of our test papers has clues about them."

"From my test paper, the clues I can see now are... there are three Evil Ghosts in this building, one on each floor."

"Among them, only one is male. The three ghosts are surnamed Ma, Yang, and Zhao. One is a Long Tongue Ghost, and one is a pregnant ghost."

"That's all I can figure out from my test paper for now. What about yours?"

Gu Mian looked up at the others.

The first to respond was Chu Change.

"The clues I can see from my test paper are similar to yours, but there's one extra. My essay question is..."

"Given that there are three Evil Ghosts in the building who knew each other before death, find the corresponding vehicle for each of the three ghosts."

Finally, a question directly related to the driving test.

Three vehicles were parked by the road outside: a prison van, an ambulance, and a Spirit Car. The meaning of the question was self-evident—

Each of the three ghosts corresponded to one vehicle.

He asked the others, and the clues they could find on their test papers were all pretty much the same, nothing special.

"Alright," Gu Mian patted the funeral wreath beneath him and stood up. "Back to the first topic: splitting up."

"Using the clues from the test questions, we can eliminate most of the mourning halls on this floor."

"There are only three Evil Ghosts in the building, surnamed Ma, Yang, and Zhao. So now we're looking for mourning halls with these three surnames. You've all seen the elegiac couplets, right?"

As he spoke, he reached up and tore down the elegiac couplet hanging above.

The others wore stiff expressions; they had never seen anyone treat ancestral memorials so casually.

"Solemnly mourning Mr. Jiang's eternal passing. Respectfully presented by your junior, Liu Qiangfeng." Gu Mian read the elegiac couplet in his hand.

"From the elegiac couplets, we can determine the surname of the deceased in the mourning hall. I don't need to tell you what to do next, do I?"

Fireworks Can Be Cold, the sharp-featured, thin man, spoke hesitantly, "What if we run into a ghost?"

"If you see a ghost, run. If you can't outrun it, you're out. Didn't you encounter ghosts in the last instance? It's not like you'll actually die, anyway."

I'm the one who's actually dead here, and I haven't complained. You don't need to be so timid, do you?