

Collapse 361

Chapter 361 Fatty's Boxed Meal is Really Delicious_1

A rusty lock held the door to this floor tightly shut; one glance was enough to know it couldn't be opened. Of course, that wouldn't necessarily be the case if Gu Mian took out his saw. However, Gu Mian was reluctant to do such a thing openly with everyone watching, fearing it would shift suspicion for Li Wentao's disappearance onto himself.

Li Yibai and Pan Yue had glanced at his guitar bag more than once, hesitating, seemingly wanting Gu Mian to abandon the thing. But seeing that Gu Mian didn't seem tired at all, the two swallowed the words they were about to say.

Chu Changge took two steps forward and reached out to touch the rusty lock. Then, he turned back. "It's been locked for a long time and hasn't been opened."

007 was right. One of the stairway doors was indeed locked, but Gu Mian and the others didn't have time to check if the door on the other side of this floor was also locked. Even if both doors were locked, it wouldn't necessarily prove 007 was telling the truth. She might have just happened to pass by this floor and coincidentally noticed the lock, which is why she said what she did. Of course, these were all just guesses for now.

Just then, Chu Changge spoke again, "I've been counting. This is the sixth floor."

The door on the sixth floor was locked.

Gu Mian looked down the staircase. "Let's keep going down and see if there are any traces at the place Pan Yue and Xu Keke mentioned—the place where Li Wentao was attacked."

The people behind them all looked somewhat nervous; their footsteps even became lighter.

It didn't take long; they only went down one more floor.

Pan Yue, from the back, suddenly cried out, "It's this floor! I remember this place."

Gu Mian halted.

This was the fifth floor. If what 007 said was true, then the fifth floor—where Keke and Pan Yue had seen Li Wentao—was only one level below the sixth floor where 007 had been trapped.

Chu Changge glanced at his watch again. "It's 2:53. Hurry up."

Hearing this, Gu Mian quickened his pace and walked through the door. Pan Yue and Li Yibai seemed apprehensive but still followed closely behind.

"Turn right after entering," Keke, who was close behind Gu Mian, instructed softly.

Likely due to the lack of windows, it was pitch black beyond the door, as if the space had been filled with thick, black water. The moment they stepped through the gloomy doorway, the others behind Gu Mian shivered violently.

The flashlight beam seemed weak, but it still managed to illuminate a small area. Gu Mian, holding the flashlight, led the way, directing the beam to the right. The others huddled close behind him, like a tail that had sprouted from Gu Mian.

Before long, Gu Mian noticed some traces.

A pool of blood appeared within the flashlight beam.

The moment she saw the blood, Pan Yue recoiled.

Gu Mian took a few more steps forward, and the traces ahead were fully exposed in the flashlight beam. A large patch of blood spread along the wall. Under the combined effect of the darkness and the flashlight beam, the bloodstains appeared to turn a deep black.

As a doctor, Gu Mian knew very well that this amount of blood loss was enough to send a person into shock. Yet, there was no one around the bloodstains.

If one looked more closely... Gu Mian shifted the flashlight slightly, and the beam followed, illuminating an adjacent area.

It was a drag mark made of blood.

The terrifying bloodstain stretched continuously, extending into the darkness beyond the flashlight's reach, its end point unknown.

"We didn't see this last time!" Pan Yue exclaimed, her mouth agape in surprise.

"It might have appeared after you left." Gu Mian frowned.

He glanced at Chu Changge beside him. Half of Chu Changge's face was illuminated by the flashlight, giving his expression a somewhat eerie look.

Staring at the bloodstains, 007 asked, "Should we... follow it and see?"

At her words, Pan Yue and Li Yibai both flinched, clearly disliking the suggestion.

Chu Changge raised his hand. "2:55."

Gu Mian immediately started to move. "Let's go," he said, quickly advancing along the blood trail.

Seeing 007 and the others follow, Pan Yue and Li Yibai, not daring to act alone, also stuck close behind.

The drag mark stretched through the darkness, reaching the stairway door at the other end... but it didn't stop there. Gu Mian saw the drag mark continue downward, disappearing into the dark staircase.

"Do we... do we keep going down?" Pan Yue asked, tightly gripping Keke who was beside her.

Keke, equally frightened, gripped her hand in return; both seemed just as scared.

Gu Mian remained silent and started down the stairs.

The bloodstains continued downward. Gu Mian silently followed them until there were no more stairs to descend. There, the gruesome trail finally began to lighten and fade, as if nearing its end.

This was already the first floor; they had descended from the fifth. In front of them was a half-open door.

The gradually fading bloodstain extended to the first-floor stairway entrance, turned a corner, and then vanished completely, as if it stopped just behind the door.

Keke stared at where the bloodstain had vanished, looking terrified. "It... it stopped behind the door, didn't it?" she stammered.

Indeed, it was behind this very door. No one dared to pass through the half-open door, nor did they dare to pull open the closed half.

"What do we do?" Pan Yue asked, still clutching Keke tightly, her body starting to tremble.

Li Yibai, also flustered, blurted out, "Why don't we go to the second floor first, then cross over to the other side and look from there...?"

But just as he was rambling, he suddenly saw Gu Mian, who was at the front, take a few quick steps forward and violently wrench open the closed half of the door.

"Wait!" Li Yibai hurriedly cried out, trying to stop him.

But it was too late.

Everyone saw what was behind the door.

Screams instantly filled the entire stairwell. Pan Yue clung to Keke tightly, not daring to open her eyes. Li Yibai also grabbed 007 tightly, his face deathly pale, not daring to look up.

There was indeed something behind the door—or rather, it was *on* the door.

It was Fatty.

He was hanging by a steel wire from the doorframe, his face already purple.

Gu Mian looked at the person swinging slightly from the doorframe.

The first casualty of the night was Fatty.

Meanwhile, Pan Yue's voice erupted. She seemed to have gone slightly mad. "Who did this! Who did this!" she shrieked.

Keke held onto her tightly, biting her lip and saying nothing.

Li Yibai, also tugging at 007, said with a trembling voice, "Don't... don't look! Let's leave this godforsaken place! I don't want to stay here any longer!"

But just as almost everyone was succumbing to panic, a peculiar sound suddenly reached their ears. It came from below their feet, from beneath the stairs. It sounded as if something was moving in the triangular space between the staircase and the ground.

Upon hearing the sound, those on the stairs instinctively looked down.

There, in the dark space below, a deathly pale face had appeared at some point without them noticing.

It was Li Wentao.

Chapter 362 Wentao Rushing to the Moon_1

A gasp echoed sharply on the staircase.

Immediately after, the sound of frantic scrambling followed.

Pan Yue was the first to flee, followed by Li Yibai, who, clutching 007, attempted to bolt upwards.

Just as Pan Yue had scrambled partway up, Keke, who had closely followed, grabbed her. "We don't need to be scared! He can't kill anymore. Don't you remember? A ghost can only kill one person a night!"

Upon hearing this, Pan Yue hesitated and stopped. The panic on her face didn't lessen, and she didn't head back down. Instead, she watched Li Wentao below from a distance.

Although Keke spoke bravely, her body honestly followed Pan Yue up a few more steps; it was clear she also didn't want to get too close to what was below.

007, being tugged along by Li Yibai, also symbolically climbed a few steps before stopping not far from Gu Mian, looking down.

Gu Mian was now the closest person to Li Wentao. He hadn't moved.

The first victim had appeared. The ghost shouldn't kill again unless it wanted to perish along with them.

At this moment, Li Wentao, who had been hiding beneath the dark staircase, emerged.

His face was still deathly pale, but his expression was one of sheer terror, not at all like a ghost's.

Even so, the few people on the staircase retreated several more steps, warily eyeing the man below.

"You..." Li Wentao's face showed panic and bewilderment. "You're all here too..."

Then, as if suddenly realizing something, he blurted out urgently, "N-No... It wasn't me! He was already dead when I got here!"

Li Wentao said this agitatedly, taking a few steps forward, wanting to ascend the stairs.

Immediately, Pan Yue's raised voice cut in, "Don't come any closer!"

Li Wentao's steps faltered. He seemed at a loss but still looked pleadingly towards those on the stairs. "It really wasn't me! I couldn't do something like this! You've misunderstood!"

His agitated voice reverberated through the dark staircase, making one's hair stand on end. Li Wentao, standing at the foot of the stairs, sent a chill down everyone's spine.

At this point, Keke spoke, her voice trembling, "You're lying! We clearly saw you on the verge of death, but then you turned around and chased us like a madman! Weren't you trying to kill us?"

Hearing this, a look of dawning comprehension appeared on Li Wentao's face. "What 'on the verge of death'? What 'chasing you'? I don't know what you're talking about! I've been in another building the whole time; I never ran into you at all! Oh, right... Gu Mian! I ran into Gu Mian..."

As he spoke, he started to turn to look at Gu Mian behind him. But as soon as he turned his head, he saw Fatty's face, already a ghastly blue-purple, and his movement froze.

Li Wentao didn't dare to turn his head any further. Maintaining this strange posture, he spoke urgently, "Gu Mian, weren't you with me the whole time? You can testify that I didn't chase them, right?"

Before Gu Mian could speak, Pan Yue's sharp voice interjected, "You went to Gu Mian after chasing us! I distinctly saw you sneakily appear behind him, who knows what you were planning! And after you went over to the other side, no one chased us anymore! You're clearly the ghost, the murdering ghost in this game! And..."

"...And we followed the blood trail you left to find this place! It's obvious you came down from upstairs and killed Wang Pan! If you didn't kill him, why were you hiding down here, too scared to come out?"

"I d—" Li Wentao's expression grew frantic, his voice rising. "When I arrived, he was already dead! Then I heard you coming downstairs. I... I hid here because I was afraid you'd misunderstand!"

"Right," Pan Yue glared at Li Wentao, her eyes glinting in the darkness. "You didn't have time to escape, so you hid here. You just didn't expect to accidentally make a noise and be discovered by us!"

Li Wentao's eyes were turning red. He stared fixedly at Pan Yue. "I told you it wasn't me! Why do you keep targeting me? Why do you say I killed him? I get it... It was you!"

"You're the one who killed him, and now you're desperately trying to frame me!" Li Wentao's eyes were bloodshot. The moment the words left his mouth, he lunged violently at Pan Yue.

Pan Yue, caught completely off guard, hastily retreated a step but bumped into Keke. Neither managed to stay upright, and they both fell heavily to the ground.

Pan Yue's head struck the staircase handrail, and blood began to flow.

Meanwhile, Li Wentao, his face contorted with rage, was already rushing towards her.

In her panic, Pan Yue tried to get up, but it felt as if the hem of her clothes was caught on something, and she stumbled back down onto the stairs.

Li Wentao drew nearer and nearer, reaching her in the blink of an eye.

Then, Pan Yue felt Li Wentao grab her by the collar and slam her towards the nearby wall.

"Go to hell!" the man's furious voice thundered from above her.

"Help!" Pan Yue shrieked in terror.

But just as her head was about to smash against the wall, Li Wentao, who was in front of her, suddenly staggered, failing in his attempt.

It was Chu Changge who had grabbed Li Wentao's arm.

Just then, 007 also quickly caught up and grabbed Li Wentao, wrapping his arms around him.

Li Yibai was still lagging behind. Keke, on the side, remained seated on the floor, seemingly stunned with fright. Gu Mian was still making his way up the stairs.

But Li Wentao had descended into madness; two people couldn't hold him back at all. He continued to struggle, switching to strangling Pan Yue's neck with both hands.

Although the two restraining him prevented him from using much force, Pan Yue was already starting to suffocate.

And just then, a voice suddenly resounded throughout the entire building, like the announcements for school calisthenics—

"The first night has ended. Voting will now begin. All players, please select your voting target within one minute."

Three o'clock!

Keke, who had been stunned speechless, lifted her head. "What's this? How do we vote?"

"I don't know!" Li Yibai exclaimed, frantic. "Even if we vote someone out, what then?!"

Pan Yue was still being choked by Li Wentao, already finding it hard to breathe. At this critical juncture, Pan Yue forced out, her voice hoarse, "I... I vote for Li Wentao!"

RING RING—

A telephone rang in the darkness.

Yue Nu, who was in her bedroom writing something, abruptly lifted her head and looked towards the telephone in the center of the living room.

She was a player in this instance, in the same Senior Year Class 23 as 007.

However, it was only at dinnertime that she learned she was a day student. Her mother picked her up and took her home, causing her to lose contact with 007.

Yue Nu already knew the game rules, but she hadn't known how she was supposed to vote at three in the morning. Now, however, she understood.

She had mentally prepared herself, so she wouldn't be too surprised by anything happening at three in the morning. It was just a phone call at three in the morning. Only... such a loud telephone ring, yet her parents in the adjacent bedroom showed no reaction whatsoever. They were sleeping a bit too soundly.

Yue Nu didn't delay. She quickly walked to the telephone and picked it up.

Immediately, a mechanical voice sounded from the receiver—

"The first night has ended. Voting will now begin. All players, please select your voting target within one minute."

Chapter 363 Sexy Gugu, Serving Bento Online_1

Yue Nu tightly gripped the paper she held, thinking fast in the darkness.

She'd been all alone since dinner and hadn't received any clues. Naturally, she had no idea who to vote for.

This game... should allow abstentions, but I absolutely refuse to do that.

Most people probably don't have any clues on the first night and will likely abstain.

However, if eleven out of twelve players abstain, and one person suddenly votes for another, the one player with the vote will be automatically out.

I have no idea how things will develop, nor do I know if I'll be the unfortunate one to get voted out.

But there's always a chance of the unexpected.

Therefore, to protect myself, I must vote for one of the remaining eleven players.

Deciding who to vote for is a challenge in itself.

Yue Nu swiftly scanned the names on her list while thinking. There were twelve names, representing the players in the "Close Your Eyes" game.

Although it's confirmed that 007 is an instance player, the instance rules don't specify that instance players can't play the ghost. Yue Nu thought.

Then, her gaze fell upon the most conspicuous name—Gu Mian.

This is a name known almost universally. Killing this person will earn thirty thousand Game Coins.

Thirty thousand Game Coins... a sum so large it's almost unthinkable.

However, I still don't know if this Gu Mian is an instance NPC or a player. Even if he's a player, killing him in the instance is useless; I'd have to actually kill him in reality to get those thirty thousand Game Coins.

She didn't dwell on that name for long.

Although I'm very tempted to do something to the owner of this name, I can only think about it for now.

Moving on, her eyes landed on the last name on the list—"Zhang Pingfan."

This person is the best choice. I'm not sure about the others, but I know this Zhang Pingfan mysteriously disappeared the day before we entered the instance.

The others probably think the same way and will also find the person who mysteriously disappeared the most suspicious.

If I have to make a blind vote, Zhang Pingfan, the one who mysteriously disappeared, is the most likely candidate.

As she thought this, Yue Nu tightened her grip on the paper and slowly said into the microphone, "I vote for Zhang Pingfan."

Silence fell on the other end, but the line remained open.

Yue Nu furrowed her brows, waiting for what would come next.

The silence didn't last long. After about twenty seconds, the robotic voice echoed from the speaker again.

"The first round of voting has ended. Eight players voted, three players abstained. The player with the most votes in the first round is—"

"Li Wentao, seven votes."

Li Wentao? Seven votes?

That's a boy from my class, I remember him.

Yue Nu's brows furrowed even tighter.

Does that mean I was the only one who voted for Zhang Pingfan?

Seven people voted for Li Wentao. Something must have happened that I don't know about... If seven people are so sure Li Wentao is the ghost, then he almost certainly is, right?

And eight plus three is eleven. Only eleven people voted, which means one person has already been killed?

As Yue Nu pondered these questions, she waited quietly for the rest of the announcement. The line hadn't been disconnected; the summary of player numbers was still to come.

The summary would state the remaining number of ghosts and civilians, and Li Wentao's identity would also be publicly announced.

But isn't the pause between the last sentence and the summary a bit too long? Yue Nu's brows knitted tighter.

During this pause, Pan Yue, who was being choked, suddenly felt the grip on her neck loosen. She fell to the floor. Ignoring the pain, she immediately took a deep breath. Fresh air flooded her lungs, and she felt as if she had been brought back to life.

Right! Seven people voted for Li Wentao, so he's going to be eliminated!

Thinking this, she raised her head to look for Li Wentao.

However, as Pan Yue raised her head, she saw the horrified expressions on Li Yibai and Keke's faces.

Next were Lin Qi, who was frozen stiff, and Meiren Chu, whose expression was unnatural.

Finally, there was Gu Mian, who had just walked up, flashlight in hand.

The flashlight beam cut through the darkness, allowing her to see everyone's expressions clearly.

Without exception, none of them were looking at her.

Whether their faces showed terror or shock, these emotions weren't directed at her, but... above her.

What's wrong? Pan Yue froze.

Then, she suddenly felt something warm drip onto her face.

Her hand trembled slightly as she reached up to touch her face.

Then she looked down at what she had wiped off.

It was blood.

Blood that was so dark red in the blackness it looked almost black.

Stunned, Pan Yue looked up.

It was Li Wentao. He could no longer make a sound.

He looked like a steamed bun being torn apart, his skin slowly ripping to reveal the bright red flesh beneath.

It was torn and stretched like rubber bands, gradually pulling taut until it snapped with a SNAP, revealing the white bones beneath the flesh.

Pan Yue heard something cracking.

Tiny cracks spread across the white bones, gradually covering them, until with a sharp CRACK, they snapped like dry kindling.

Li Wentao was still conscious.

His eyes were wide open, tears streaming down his face.

Pan Yue watched, dumbfounded.

With a final CRACK like breaking firewood, his neck was wrenched backward as if someone had violently twisted it. His head lolled onto his shoulder, and he finally fell silent.

Dead.

His large body then slumped onto the staircase, right in front of Pan Yue.

No one had expected the outcome of the public vote to be like this.

The sound of Li Yibai dry-heaving echoed. He clung to the stair railing, retching repeatedly.

Pan Yue seemed unable to process what she had just witnessed, her expression blank.

Just as Li Wentao's body thudded to the ground, the mechanical voice echoed once more from the building's loudspeakers.

"The first round of the game has ended. One player was killed, one player was voted out. The second round begins. Ten players remain: seven civilians and three ghosts."

Pan Yue turned her head stiffly. "What... what did it say? How many ghosts are left?"

Keke stammered from beside her, "There are... still three ghosts..."

That meant Li Wentao wasn't a ghost; he hadn't killed anyone.

But now he lay dead here, his death horrifyingly gruesome.

Everyone else was also stunned, apparently unable to believe this outcome.

Pan Yue scrambled to her feet, agitated. She didn't dare look at Li Wentao lying beside her. Instead, she looked at the others pleadingly, "How could Li Wentao not be the ghost? He is the ghost, isn't he? You all thought he was the ghost too, right?!"

No one answered her.

The stairwell plunged into silence.

Receiving no answer, Pan Yue finally lost control. She shoved 007 aside and fled as if escaping for her life.

Chapter 364 Among Them [Third Update]_1

In the dark living room.

Yue Nu suddenly furrowed her brows.

"What happened? There are still three ghosts left even after Li Wentao was voted out?"

This meant Li Wentao wasn't a ghost.

Eight people had voted, and three had abstained. Out of the eight who voted, seven had chosen Li Wentao, yet this was the result.

Those seven votes hadn't hit the real ghost at all; they had voted for the wrong person!

"What a group of fools, those seven people."

She wearily rubbed her forehead and hung up the phone.

Yue Nu got up and headed to her bedroom.

The ghosts' killing window was between 8:00 p.m. and 3:00 a.m. the next day. It was already past three, so she didn't have to worry about a ghost suddenly crawling out from under her bed to kill her.

"I still need to rest. Only by resting well can I make the right judgments," she muttered to herself as she lay on the bed and pulled the blanket over her. "Tomorrow, I'll ask which seven people voted, and also which player was killed by a ghost last night..."

The night in the instance was always extraordinarily long.

Gu Mian and the others also spent the long night searching for their school's location.

The two buildings were not too far from their school, only about a half-hour walk away.

They had nowhere to hide Fatty's body, so they had to leave him there.

Thankfully, the two buildings were located in what seemed to be a development zone—remote and seldom visited, so a body inside would hardly be discovered.

Otherwise, if the police caught them, this game would be over.

Last night, after realizing they had voted for the wrong person, Pan Yue had left in a state of agitation. Li Yibai had gone after her but failed to catch up.

When Gu Mian and the others ran out, Pan Yue was nowhere to be seen.

They didn't have the energy to look for the missing Pan Yue and could only return to the school first.

Guided by road signs, they eventually found the school. Although it was only about a half-hour walk between the buildings and the school, they weren't familiar with the route, so they didn't reach the school gates until around six in the morning.

The sky was beginning to brighten.

Although they had stayed up all night, none of them felt sleepy.

Li Yibai was crouching by the school gates, looking dejected.

He had appeared downcast the entire way and hadn't said a word since the vote. Yet, he still stuck close to 007; it was evident he and Lin Qi were indeed childhood friends.

It was a cool September morning, and a chilly wind blew intermittently, causing Keke, who was standing nearby, to shiver.

The street was empty; only the five of them were gathered by the school gate, looking at each other in silence.

As silence spread among the five of them, 007 suddenly spoke, "There were eight of us when we first went. Now, there are only five."

Two dead, one ran away.

Keke quietly nodded. "But we still haven't found any clues about the ghosts..."

The person killed last night and the one voted out were both civilians.

The failure of the first round's bloc voting had put the civilians in a passive position. There were now ten people left in total: three ghosts and seven civilians.

Moreover, they had no clues about who the ghosts were.

Another gust of cold wind swept past, accompanied by the sound of its whistling. Li Yibai, still crouched on the ground, suddenly lifted his head as if he'd found a burst of courage.

His expression was agitated. "Listen! Whether there are really ghosts or something else, we should call the police! Two people are dead! Two people! We have to call the police!"

As he spoke, he tried to stand up agitatedly, looking as if he might rush off to call the police at any second, but 007 firmly held him back.

Of course, she couldn't let Li Yibai call the police. If the police intervened, all of them would be called in for questioning and might even be detained for twenty-four hours. The success of their mission was at stake; they absolutely couldn't afford any mistakes at this juncture.

Just then, Keke, who was nearby, also suddenly spoke up, "Don't forget, we all voted for Li Wentao together! We're all implicated in his death. If you call the police now, we'll all be arrested!"

Li Yibai blurted out, his words tumbling quickly, "How could it be our fault? It was clearly the ghosts who killed people! And it was this game that made us vote! If we didn't vote, were we supposed to just stand by and watch Pan Yue get killed?"

It was true. Given the situation last night, if they hadn't voted for Li Wentao, Pan Yue would most likely have died.

007's voice was grave. "Do you think the police will believe you about ghosts? You'll just be locked up as a lunatic. Then, one day, you'll die in your room, just like Li Wentao and Wang Pan."

At her words, Li Yibai abruptly fell silent. He dropped his head and slumped to the ground, saying nothing more.

But Keke, who was nearby, sounded hesitant. "But I have a question... I remember rule four states that 'civilians' can't kill other players, while 'ghosts' can kill any player, right? Since Li Wentao wasn't a ghost, why was he able to attack Pan Yue in front of us yesterday?"

"My guess is that the game's definition of 'killing' versus 'harming' isn't the same," Chu Changge, who had been silent until now, suddenly interjected. "The game probably determined that Li Wentao's actions last night didn't pose a substantial life-threatening risk to Pan Yue. If Pan Yue had truly been on the verge of death, the game would have intervened."

Keke glanced cautiously at Chu Changge. "You're really impressive; you seem to know everything."

Chu Changge said nothing.

Nearby, 007 suddenly looked up, giving Chu Changge and Keke a strange glance. She felt Keke's words carried a hidden meaning, an indescribable strangeness. Something was off.

By now, the sun had fully risen, its rays bringing a measure of warmth.

Students had begun to trickle through the school gates.

Gu Mian and the others blended in with them and slipped into the school.

"Why did we come back...?" Li Yibai mumbled. Although he had followed the others back to school, he still didn't seem to understand why. "Why don't we just go home? Mom and Dad are there. We'll definitely be safe!"

Gu Mian looked at Li Yibai, who was sticking close to 007. "Don't you understand yet? The only way to resolve this is to find all the ghosts and vote them out. As long as even one ghost remains alive, the deaths won't stop, and the game will continue."

Hearing this, Li Yibai shivered violently.

007 also spoke up, "That's right. We came back to meet up with the others."

Only eight of them had been transported to the buildings last night.

The other four, who hadn't been there at all, were Zhang Pingfan, Yuan Qinghua, Guo Jimei, and Yue Nu.

Zhang Pingfan, who had been missing for two days, could be set aside for the moment. But they definitely needed to find out what the other three had been doing last night.

"Oh, right," Keke said, suddenly turning to Chu Changge. "Didn't you say before that the ghosts gathered the eight of us there to make it easier to observe us?"

Chu Changge nodded slightly.

Keke continued, "Well, if it was to make observation easier, then there must be a ghost among us eight who has been watching us this whole time, right?"

Hearing this, Li Yibai froze.

Eight people. Now only six survived.

And a ghost was hiding among these six...

Hiding right there, among them.

Chapter 365 One More _1

Just as 007 also stayed in place following Keke's words, she suddenly felt a hand on her shoulder.

She immediately turned to look, and what met her eyes was Yue Nu's face.

By now, Yue Nu too had taken a good look at everyone around her.

Aside from one boy whom she didn't recognize, 007, Keke, and Meiren Chu could all be accessed through their player interfaces, their nicknames hinting at the names they used in this instance.

However, the nickname of the guy carrying a large guitar on the side was not like the others.

It was the Green Doctor.

Yue Nu swiftly ran through the list of twelve names in her head and found that none matched up with 'Doctor'.

Then she remembered the special name "Gu Mian" on the list, and couldn't help but squint her eyes.

Upon seeing Yue Nu, Li Yibai immediately spoke, somewhat excitedly, "Where were you last night?"

Yue Nu furrowed her brows slightly.

Looking at his demeanor, it seemed that something must have happened to them last night, and it was likely that these few had cast the seven votes for Li Wentao.

She glanced at 007 in front of her, "Isn't it normal for me to go home every night? Last night, I was taken home... I received a call at three in the morning asking me to vote. Do you guys know what happened?"

As she spoke, she looked at Li Yibai as if waiting for his reply.

Gu Mian looked at Yue Nu, who had appeared out of nowhere. He checked her player interface; her in-game nickname was indeed "Yue Nu."

So, she had been taken home yesterday. No wonder she had disappeared inexplicably.

And not only that, but Yue Nu apparently received the game's voting notification last night via a phone call, which meant that no matter where you were, you would receive the voting notification on time.

However, speaking of last night's vote...

At this point, Li Yibai's voice echoed from the side, his words increasing in volume, seemingly having found someone to confide in.

He was different from the others who had faced those instances before. The most horrifying thing in his life had been bumping into the class teacher while dating.

He was just an ordinary person, yet he was unexpectedly pulled into this bloody and terrifying game.

Engaging in a struggle of killing or being killed.

"You don't know..." Li Yibai raised his voice to Yue Nu, "It's that game, the Close Your Eyes game we played! It's still going on; the ghost is still killing! We were suddenly somewhere else last night... There were two buildings, two ominous buildings, then... Wang Pan and Li Wentao died!"

Yue Nu put on a shocked expression. Gu Mian noticed that she wasn't actually shocked, but was just pretending in front of Li Yibai.

Yue Nu widened her eyes, exclaiming, "How did this happen!? Did someone die last night? I was puzzled to hear on the phone yesterday that Li Wentao had been voted out by seven people. I didn't expect it to be because of this game... But does the person with the most votes in each round die?"

Li Yibai firmly replied, "They die! We saw him die with our own eyes!"

But just as his eager retort was about to spill out, a slightly plump middle-aged man suddenly approached.

Gu Mian saw Li Yibai, who formerly had his mouth open, suddenly shut it tight.

This seemed to be a teacher from Li Yibai's class.

Indeed, as the slightly plump middle-aged man approached, he stared at Li Yibai with a strange look, "What are you doing here? It's so late, shouldn't you be in class?"

They all knew if they told the class teacher about what happened last night, they would all be considered insane and sent home individually.

No one dared to be alone under these circumstances.

Keke and Li Yibai immediately nodded like chicks pecking at grain, not daring to retort.

Under the man's gaze, the two quickly walked away.

The middle-aged man gave the remaining Gu Mian and the others a weird look, then followed after Keke and Li Yibai.

Li Yibai, who seemed anxious, had to leave. He turned back to look at Gu Mian and the others several times, seemingly trying to sneak back.

But the middle-aged man was following them closely, giving the two no chance to break away.

Watching Keke and Li Yibai's retreating figures, 007 said, "Is it really okay to let them go like this?"

Gu Mian shook his head slightly, "Well, sooner or later we have to go to their class to find people."

Last night's absentees, Yuan Qinghua, Guo Jimei, and Zhang Pingfan, were all in the same class as Keke. They were bound to find them anyway.

With no outsiders present, Yue Nu dropped her shocked expression and turned to Gu Mian, "My name is Yue Nu. What's yours? You seem to be aware that your nickname is a bit unusual."

007 frowned at Yue Nu.

She felt like Yue Nu had some inexplicable hostility towards Gu Mian, but then she let it go, figuring that Yue Nu had probably deduced something about Gu Mian's identity.

The hostility was probably due to the thirty thousand Game Coins.

Gu Mian did not really mind Yue Nu's hostility; he just glanced at her and said, "You can call me Gu Mian."

They would have to get along with her in the instance for many days to come, and the name wasn't easily hidden anyway.

Upon hearing the reply, Yue Nu withdrew her gaze, seemingly completely oblivious to the name Gu Mian.

"By the way," Yue Nu turned to look at 007 again, "Can you tell me what happened last night? Not in too much detail, just the cause and the result will do."

007 simply said, "Last night, we were inexplicably sent to two large buildings. Pan Yue witnessed something during the process and became convinced that Li Wentao was the ghost. So at three o'clock in the morning, apart from Li Wentao himself... all of us voted for Li Wentao."

Upon hearing this, Yue Nu's face showed an expression of "just as I thought."

007 continued, "The one killed by the ghost last night... it was Wang Pan, just like us, an instance player. Pan Yue became somewhat mentally unstable after she voted and learned that Li Wentao was not a ghost, then disappeared to who knows where."

Listening to these words, Yue Nu frowned, "Besides me, who else was not teleported last night?"

007 didn't hesitate to name them, "Besides you, there were Zhang Pingfan, Guo Jimei, and Yuan Qinghua."

"You've come back to school to find us—those who weren't teleported last night—haven't you? Even though we weren't with you last night, we're still under suspicion," Yue Nu said.

Gu Mian nodded, "Correct."

Unfortunately, none of these three were in his class.

Yue Nu looked at Gu Mian again, "Did you find any clues about the ghost last night? Even though you voted for the wrong person, you should've found some clues, right? Which of the remaining ten people do you find suspicious?"

"None," Gu Mian shook his head. "Aside from Keke, every person last night had a significant amount of unaccounted time. The timelines of all individuals allowed them to carry out a murder."

Yue Nu frowned, "You guys really are..."

Gu Mian interrupted her, "Did you vote last night?"

Yue Nu seemed a bit unhappy that her words were suddenly interrupted, but she answered, "Yes, last night I..."

But before she could finish, Gu Mian saw a woman walking towards them, who seemed like a teacher.

Right now, it was school working hours, and occasionally, a few teachers passed by them.

Gu Mian ordinarily wouldn't have paid much attention to this, but at this moment, Yue Nu's expression suddenly changed, and she even stopped mid-sentence.

007's expression also changed.

Immediately after, 007 quickly spoke, "The homeroom teacher is coming. We have to go back to class. I'll go check if Pan Yue returned to school. When shall we meet back up?"

Li Wentao from their class had already been killed. His body could be discovered at any time, and in the meantime, neither of them could draw any attention with unusual behavior, or they would be easily suspected.

If they ended up becoming suspects, they might get detained for twenty-four hours.

The instance was always changing rapidly. No one knew what could happen in those twenty-four hours.

Gu Mian pondered for a moment, "We won't delay for too long. We'll come find you after the first class ends."

"Okay." 007 nodded lightly, then quickly left with Yue Nu.

Only Gu Mian and Chu Changge were left there at that moment.

Gu Mian looked at Chu Changge, who stood beside him, "Should we head back to the classroom?"

His deskmate, Xu Xingcheng, seemed to have something to do with this game. Gu Mian wanted to find out more about his deskmate.

Chu Changge gave a slight nod.

The two headed towards their classroom.

After they had walked a short distance, Gu Mian suddenly said, "Oh right, did you notice something?"

Chu Changge spoke in a soft voice, "Hmm, what are you talking about?"

They had now reached the ground floor of the teaching building.

Most of the students were sitting in the classrooms by now, and the floor was practically deserted.

Gu Mian continued, "Regarding the voting, last night there were eight voters and three abstentions."

He remembered that last night, he, Chu Changge, 007, Keke, Li Yibai, and Pan Yue—all six of them—voted for Li Wentao.

Li Wentao, who was nearly out of his mind, had also participated in the vote. His vote, made in anger, was for Pan Yue.

Thus, all seven present had voted.

Six votes for Li Wentao, one vote for Pan Yue.

But Li Wentao received seven votes last night. This meant that among the four who were absent, one of them had also voted for Li Wentao.

That's why Gu Mian asked Yue Nu earlier if she voted.

She did vote, but she left hastily before she could say who she voted for.

"In theory, Yue Nu should have been Li Wentao's seventh vote..."

Gu Mian suddenly fell silent.

They had already started ascending the stairs.

Chu Changge's eyeglasses flashed in the light. It was a few seconds before he said, "But you thought Yue Nu's tone didn't sound like she voted for Li Wentao, right?"

Exactly.

Gu Mian nodded.

Yue Nu's statements, such as "I was baffled yesterday when I heard on the phone that Li Wentao got seven votes" and "Although you voted for the wrong person," completely lacked any implication that she had also voted for Li Wentao.

So, it's very likely she voted for someone else.

"But we knew that there were only eight people who voted last night," Gu Mian frowned, "the seven of us plus Yue Nu makes eight. But if she didn't vote for Li Wentao, who cast the seventh vote for him?"

Chapter 366 The Guest-Starring Fatty_1

"Even setting aside where Li Wentao's extra seventh vote came from, it's an extraordinary coincidence that this inexplicable seventh vote also happened to be cast for Li Wentao."

Chu Changge lifted his head. "So, are you suggesting that more than the eight of us entered those two buildings last night?"

Gu Mian nodded.

There was another person. A malicious and extraordinarily cautious individual, watching their every move from a dark corner, and ultimately joining them in deciding Li Wentao's fate.

"The ghost wouldn't hesitate to cast its vote for a civilian," Gu Mian continued. "If Yue Nu's vote wasn't cast for Li Wentao, then it's certain that Li Wentao's seventh vote came from one of Zhang Pingfan, Yuan Qinghua, or Guo Jimei. That is to say, among these three people..."

Gu Mian said, looking at Chu Changge, "At least one of them is a ghost."

And there was a strong possibility that this was the ghost who killed Fatty. The ghost hiding among these three might very well be the true ghost in this game. To hang someone as large as Fatty from a doorframe was something an ordinary person couldn't do; perhaps an instance player could. But Zhang Pingfan, Yuan Qinghua, and Guo Jimei—none of them were instance players. So, the real ghost was hidden among these three.

Chu Changge fell silent. "As you just said, the ghost wouldn't hesitate to vote for a civilian. So undoubtedly, there's a ghost hiding among the six of us who voted for Li Wentao."

However, four of these six people were instance players, which made the choice difficult.

At that moment, Chu Changge suddenly stopped walking. Gu Mian turned to look at him.

Chu Changge adjusted his glasses. "Gu Mian, with your capabilities, you ought to have seen last night that Li Wentao wasn't the ghost, yet you voted anyway."

Gu Mian chuckled. "Did you not see that Li Wentao wasn't the ghost either? But you also went along and voted."

The same went for 007. She had experienced many instances and was highly intelligent; she had even managed to see through the Fairy Tale City instance's conspiracy before being assimilated. However, her performance last night was also very strange. Without any suspicion or guessing, she voted for Li Wentao in the middle of the chaos. Then there was Keke. She usually appeared to be a timid and kind high school student. Since she had no unaccounted-for time, she was considered the least suspicious. However, Gu Mian clearly saw that when Li Wentao charged at Pan Yue last night, Keke deliberately tripped Pan Yue as she tried to escape, causing Pan Yue to fall to the ground and be caught by Li Wentao. Her behavior was extremely strange. All these instance players had ulterior motives; only Fatty was purely kind-hearted, so he was the first to die.

The preparatory bell rang through the academic building.

Gu Mian didn't linger but resumed walking upstairs.

Chu Changge followed closely behind.

Suddenly, Gu Mian, who was walking ahead, said, "By the way, there's something I need to ask."

"What?" Chu Changge's voice came from behind.

"Was that you I saw last night?"

Gu Mian was referring to seeing Chu Changge at the bottom of the opposite building the previous night.

He heard Chu Changge fall silent behind him for a few seconds before slowly uttering a single word.

"Yes."

So, Chu Changge had indeed seen him downstairs at that time but had left in a great hurry.

Because their conversation on the stairs had delayed them, Gu Mian and Chu Changge arrived at the classroom after the teacher had already started the lesson.

Perhaps because students often arrived late, the teacher didn't pay much attention, merely glancing at Gu Mian and Chu Changge before allowing them into the classroom.

When Gu Mian reached his seat, he saw his deskmate, Xu Xingcheng, looking at him nervously.

"What happened with you, Chu Changge, and Wang Pan? Why didn't you return to the dormitory yesterday? Wasn't Wang Pan with you?"

Xu Xingcheng looked extremely nervous, as if someone in his family was on their deathbed.

Gu Mian turned to look at him, paused for a moment, and then said, "I remember you asking me about the 'Close Your Eyes' game yesterday."

Xu Xingcheng's expression faltered, a guilty look on his face. "What about it? Did you remember who the ghost is?"

"No," Gu Mian said, shaking his head while looking at Xu Xingcheng. "We played a round last night."

"What?" Xu Xingcheng looked even more guilty, his mouth slightly agape. "You guys really played a round?"

They really played a round? Gu Mian caught the unusual undertone in this question; it was as if someone had already told Xu Xingcheng they had played the game last night.

Gu Mian calmly nodded. "Mm, last night Wang Pan was killed by the ghost."

After he said this, Xu Xingcheng's face twitched slightly. "Then...where is he?"

"Killed by the ghost."

"Stop joking around with me!"

"I'm not lying."

At this point, Xu Xingcheng stuttered, "Th-then... then you guys must've voted last night. Who got the most votes?"

Gu Mian looked at Xu Xingcheng. "It was Li Wentao."

Hearing this, Xu Xingcheng's face turned somewhat pale. "Then...then what happened to Li Wentao in the end?"

Gu Mian lowered his head. "The one with the most votes, naturally, gets eliminated."

"What does 'eliminated' mean?"

"Dead."

Just then, the teacher on the podium seemed to notice something was amiss in their corner.

"Xu Xingcheng, what's wrong with your face? Shouldn't you go to the infirmary?"

Xu Xingcheng, whose name had been called, quickly replied, "I'm fine, really..."

Gu Mian noticed that the teacher hadn't asked about Fatty, who was absent, as if it didn't matter at all.

What was going on? He found it strange.

Just then, Gu Mian suddenly heard Chu Changge's voice from behind. "Look at the back."

Hearing this, Gu Mian looked back.

He was sitting in the second-to-last row. Behind him, besides Chu Changge, was the rear blackboard.

He could now clearly see the writing on it: "Wang Pan – Three days' leave."

Fatty had died last night; he absolutely couldn't have requested leave. So, was this... the ghost's doing?

Xu Xingcheng, beside him, seemed completely oblivious to the message on the rear blackboard, solely focused on breaking out in a cold sweat.

Afterward, no matter how Gu Mian tried to subtly probe, Xu Xingcheng kept his mouth shut.

Chu Changge also noticed something was amiss with Xu Xingcheng; the light glinting off his glasses also occasionally shifted towards Xu Xingcheng's direction.

The first class passed very quickly.

Although Gu Mian wanted to ask Xu Xingcheng more, he had already arranged to meet with 007 and the others during the first break, so he had to leave.

Chapter 367 There is Still Time_1

To Gu Mian's surprise, he and Chu Changge bumped into Keke and Li Yibai, who were hurrying over.

Their classrooms weren't on this floor, so it seemed they had come over specifically.

"Why did you come right after the first class?"

Gu Mian didn't recall telling Li Yibai and Keke to meet up after the first class.

Keke, who was right behind them, spoke up, "Our second class this morning is PE. We asked the teacher for leave and came straight here."

Before Gu Mian could speak, Chu Changge asked, "What about the other two?"

He was asking about Guo Jimei and Yuan Qinghua, who were in the same class as Keke and Li Yibai.

Keke's expression turned a bit sour. "They went to PE class..."

Gone to PE class? Gu Mian was also surprised. It would take some serious nerve to leave the main group and attend PE class after two people died just last night.

But then he understood. Guo Jimei and Yuan Qinghua weren't instance players, so they wouldn't know that genuinely supernatural events existed in the world.

They most likely didn't take it seriously, perhaps even thinking the news about two deaths was just fearmongering.

Sure enough, Gu Mian heard Li Yibai explain, "We already told them about last night's game and that Wang Pan and Li Wentao died, but they just wouldn't listen!"

Gu Mian asked in surprise, "They didn't receive the voting notice last night?"

Keke replied, "They did. Yuan Qinghua and Guo Jimei share a dorm room. Last night, at exactly three o'clock, they both woke up and found a piece of paper and a pen beside them. Something was written on the paper, but they didn't pay any attention, vaguely thinking it was something they had placed there before sleeping, so they went right back to sleep... It wasn't until they woke up this morning that they discovered the paper contained the voting instructions."

Those two are unbelievably carefree...

Gu Mian said, "Let's not worry about them for now. According to the rules, the ghost doesn't kill during the day. We'll go to Class Thirteen first to find Yue Nu and Lin Qi."

He started walking as he spoke, but he stopped as soon as he lifted his foot.

He looked at Li Yibai quietly. "Where's their classroom again?"

Gu Mian hadn't visited 007's classroom before, so naturally, he couldn't lead.

Li Yibai gave him a strange look. "Didn't you use to go there often? How could you forget where it is now?"

It wasn't that he'd forgotten; he genuinely had no idea.

Gu Mian certainly couldn't lead Li Yibai around aimlessly; it was better to just admit he'd forgotten.

Li Yibai didn't say much more.

He quickly led Gu Mian and the other two to Class Thirteen of the Year Two students.

Yue Nu and 007 were already waiting there.

Seeing them arrive, Yue Nu looked at Li Yibai and Keke with a strange expression. "Where are the other two from your class?"

So, Li Yibai explained the situation to Yue Nu again.

Gu Mian noticed Pan Yue wasn't with 007 and Yue Nu. It seems she hasn't returned to school. But if she didn't come back to school, where did she go?

Yue Nu, having understood the situation, nodded.

She seemed to really enjoy making plans and controlling the overall situation.

Gu Mian heard Yue Nu say, "We need to gather everyone we can first. That way, it'll be easier to clarify certain things face-to-face, like what everyone did last night. Then we can all analyze the suspicious points together... Besides, I just thought of a method that might help us."

Li Yibai, who had moved to stand beside 007, looked at Yue Nu. "What method?"

Yue Nu shook her head. "I can't say yet. We'll discuss it when everyone is gathered."

Gu Mian quietly watched Yue Nu. Judging by her expression, it doesn't look like a good idea.

「Meanwhile, in the PE class.」

Yuan Qinghua and Guo Jimei were in the equipment room.

Logically, having been drawn into such a terrifying game, they should have actively avoided deserted places like this, especially the already gloomy equipment room.

But Yuan Qinghua was the class monitor. Fetching sports equipment during class was usually her job. This way, she could skip the warm-up run at the start of class. Today, as usual, the teacher had assigned this easy task to Yuan Qinghua.

Yuan Qinghua agreed, but she looked hesitant.

Guo Jimei noticed Yuan Qinghua's hesitation and asked in a low voice, "Are you thinking about what Li Yibai told us today?"

Yuan Qinghua hesitated, then nodded. "Although I don't believe him... after hearing it, I still feel a bit creeped out when I'm alone."

"Don't be scared. He was definitely just trying to scare us."

"But... Zhang Pingfan really did disappear after playing that game. And I heard that Wang Pan and Li Wentao didn't come to class today either."

"Okay, okay, I'll go with you. You won't be scared then, right?"

"Okay."

Seeing Yuan Qinghua looking so frightened, Guo Jimei volunteered to ask the PE teacher if she could go with her to get the equipment.

The PE teacher agreed.

For convenience, the equipment room wasn't far from the field.

The two of them soon arrived at the equipment room door.

The equipment room, located at the very end of the first-floor corridor, was indeed a bit gloomy. Fortunately, a bright electric light hung from the ceiling, keeping it from being too dark.

Guo Jimei stepped inside and looked at a basket of basketballs in the far corner. "Are we getting that basket of basketballs?"

There was no reply.

"Qinghua?" Guo Jimei turned her head, a little puzzled.

Yuan Qinghua, who had been right behind her, had vanished.

Guo Jimei froze for a moment, then quickly walked to the doorway and looked down the corridor. It was completely empty; not a soul was in sight.

"Yuan Qinghua?" she called out again. She even turned back to look around the equipment room, trying to find any sign of Yuan Qinghua.

Guo Jimei stood alone in the empty equipment room, staring at the basketballs in the corner, somewhat at a loss.

Just then, a sudden sound came from the door behind her.

She spun around. "Qinghua?"

But there was still no one behind her, only the empty doorway, as if the sound from a moment ago hadn't happened at all.

Guo Jimei stared at the empty doorway for a moment, then shifted her gaze to the dark gap between the door and the wall.

"I definitely heard a sound just now... Is she hiding?"

She muttered to herself as she approached the gap.

When she was so close she could barely move any further, Guo Jimei finally saw into the gap.

Chapter 368 Where are my teammate's brains?_1

When Gu Mian and the others rushed to the equipment room, what they heard was Guo Jimei's terrified scream coming from inside.

She had been screaming for a while; their ears were filled with her cries as soon as they turned into the corridor. Li Yibai was so scared that he took a step back, clutching 007. Fortunately, this building was on the other side of the stadium and quite isolated. Usually, not many people came here, so no one else heard Guo Jimei's screams.

Following the sound, Gu Mian hurried to the room at the end of the corridor. The door to the room was tightly closed, with a sign above the doorframe that read "Equipment Room." The terror-filled screams penetrated the tightly closed door.

Li Yibai's face turned pale. "People in PE class said Yuan Qinghua and Guo Jimei came here together to get equipment. Now it sounds like only one person is screaming inside. Could it be... the other one is dead?"

"Impossible," Yue Nu also stared intently at the door, motionless. "Didn't they say ghosts can't kill during the day?"

But that didn't rule out the ghost trying to scare people, Gu Mian thought. Under Li Yibai's terrified gaze, he reached for the doorknob and gently pushed.

CREAK—the door immediately opened a crack.

Gu Mian frowned. Strange, he thought. The door opens so easily. Why hasn't the terrified person inside run out?

The screams from inside squeezed through the crack, growing clearer. Gu Mian pushed a little harder, and the door swung halfway open. Those outside could now clearly see inside.

Guo Jimei was cowering in the farthest corner from the door, her eyes wide with terror. When she saw them, a flicker of relief crossed her face, only to be immediately swallowed by fear.

Looking at her expression...

"Is there someone behind the door?" Gu Mian murmured. Muttering to himself, he shoved the door hard. The wooden panel slammed against the wall with a loud CRASH. The sound was crisp; it didn't sound like it had hit anyone.

After Gu Mian slammed the door open, Guo Jimei, who had been screaming in the corner, finally quieted down. She slowly bent over, gasping for breath and repeatedly swallowing, her throat apparently sore from all the screaming.

So, the person behind the door is gone now? Gu Mian thought as he stepped into the room. Then he looked behind the door.

There was nothing there. Not even a bug, let alone anything bloody or horrifying. It was as if Guo Jimei had been screaming at a blank wall for ages.

The others followed him in. Even though Li Yibai saw nothing behind the door, he didn't linger near it. He quickly ran to Guo Jimei in the corner. "What did you see? Where's Yuan Qinghua?"

But Guo Jimei was still gasping for breath, too weak to answer. Meanwhile, Gu Mian had thoroughly inspected the area behind the door and found nothing.

Yue Nu, still standing by the door, suddenly lowered her voice. "She must have seen something terrifying to react like that. And whatever it was, it suddenly vanished. The six of us were together just now; none of us had time to act. The girl screaming is Guo Jimei, right? Excluding Guo Jimei, one of the other three must be the ghost."

Keke, by her side, nodded in agreement.

The other three were Zhang Pingfan, who had disappeared the day before yesterday and was still missing; Pan Yue, who had a breakdown and fled after last night's vote; and Yuan Qinghua, who had come to the equipment room with Guo Jimei and was now nowhere to be found.

In the corner, Guo Jimei had recovered enough to speak. Sure enough. "Just now... I just saw Yuan Qinghua standing behind the door!"

Guo Jimei's voice drew Gu Mian's attention, and he turned to look at her.

Li Yibai also turned curiously to look behind the door. "So where is she now? Why were you so scared?"

"She was covered in blood! Hiding right behind the door... right where you're standing, Gu Mian! Her face was deathly pale, and she was staring right at me... She was still glaring when you came and opened the door! It wasn't until Gu Mian slammed the door wide open that she vanished!"

Hearing this, Li Yibai shivered, clearly terrified. Feeling uneasy, he quickly ran to 007 and pulled her away from the door.

At this, Yue Nu raised her eyebrows. She thought for a moment, then said, "My earlier deduction might be flawed... The ghost wouldn't be so foolish as to practically announce 'I am the ghost' to everyone. I think the ghost disguised itself as Yuan Qinghua. So, the ghost must be either Zhang Pingfan or Pan Yue."

"Speaking of which..." Keke suddenly whispered, "Could that horrifying Li Wentao that Pan Yue and I saw last night also have been the ghost in disguise? Did the ghost use that to mislead all of us into voting for Li Wentao?"

"What?" Yue Nu's brow furrowed even deeper. "You all voted for Li Wentao last night because of *that*?" She sounded a little angry. "Keke, maybe, but the rest of you? Weren't you using your brains? How could you not see through such an obvious trick? You've all been through many instances. Gu Mian, Meiren Chu, 007—you three don't look like fools..."

At this, Yue Nu's brow suddenly relaxed. She spoke slowly, "Let me guess. You all voted for Li Wentao because... the three of you are ghosts?"

Chu Changge didn't say a word. 007 had already been pulled over to Guo Jimei's side by Li Yibai and wasn't part of this conversation.

Gu Mian, however, spoke up, his words leaving Yue Nu speechless. "Or what? Did you expect us to abandon Li Wentao, a suspect, at the last minute and blindly pick someone else we knew nothing about to be eliminated? We couldn't guarantee we wouldn't accidentally target you."

Yue Nu was struck speechless. After a few seconds of silence, she said, "True. It's impossible for no one to be eliminated in the first round of voting. Compared to someone we knew nothing about, voting for Li Wentao, who was at least somewhat suspicious, was the only option."

Meanwhile, Keke had run to Guo Jimei's side, seemingly wanting to ask her something.

Just then, Chu Changge, who had been silent nearby, suddenly spoke. "Yue Nu."

Hearing her name, Yue Nu turned to him. "What is it?" She always felt there was something off about this man with glasses, be it his game nickname that didn't quite match his appearance, or his chilling expression.

Chu Changge continued, "Who did you vote for last night?"

Yue Nu paused, slightly taken aback, then answered, "Zhang Pingfan." She herself had also voted for Zhang Pingfan—a complete shot in the dark, without knowing any details. In a way, it was even more thoughtless than Gu Mian's group.

Gu Mian, however, wasn't concerned about whether his teammates were using their brains or not. Even if he considered it, there was no solution to that problem. He remained silent, thinking. So, Yue Nu didn't vote for Li Wentao, just as I thought.

So who cast the seventh vote for Li Wentao?

While Gu Mian was pondering this, Guo Jimei, in the corner, tightly gripped Keke, who had just approached her. "This murder game you're all talking about—is it real? Did Li Wentao and Wang Pan really die last night?!"

Keke silently nodded. "It's true."

Guo Jimei's voice suddenly rose. "Then the ghost who killed them must be Yuan Qinghua!"

At this, Gu Mian looked at Yue Nu. "I think there were some flaws in your earlier speculation."

Yue Nu asked, puzzled, "Are you talking about your idea that one of Zhang Pingfan or Pan Yue must be the ghost?"

Gu Mian nodded slightly and said softly, "There's another possibility..."

"That is, Guo Jimei didn't see anything at all."

Chapter 369 What Kind of Thing?_1

She saw nothing, simply screaming desperately at the wall, waiting for them to arrive.

Yue Nu was slightly startled and lowered her voice, "You make a good point."

Li Yibai had advised Yuan Qinghua and Guo Jimei against coming to class before it started, but they still showed up.

Guo Jimei might also have guessed that the others would look for them during gym class, so she staged this horror drama here by herself.

Of course, these were just guesses.

Right now, no one could be certain who the ghost was. Even if what Guo Jimei said was true, it was impossible to determine if a ghost was deliberately faking it.

When Gu Mian voiced his guess, his voice was very soft, and Guo Jimei at the other end of the room didn't hear him.

At this moment, Gu Mian turned his head again to look at the visibly shaken Guo Jimei.

She was gripping Keke's hand tightly, constantly turning her head to look around, as if terrified that something would jump out from a corner.

"Alright," Yue Nu stepped forward. "Let's leave this place first. I'm afraid if we stay any longer, someone else might disappear."

Hearing this, Guo Jimei nodded vigorously.

Apparently, what had just happened frightened her, shattering her conviction that "this is just a game."

Since Yuan Qinghua and Guo Jimei could be suddenly separated after coming here, the same might happen to Gu Mian and the others.

Yue Nu frowned as she thought, a puzzled expression on her face. Gu Mian could tell she was likely wondering why the ghost would pull such a stunt during the day when it supposedly couldn't kill anyone.

Still pondering, she returned to Gu Mian and the others and asked hesitantly, "Were you all mysteriously separated last night too?"

Gu Mian nodded. The ghost had been consistently using tactics to separate them, as if it wanted to observe them individually.

By this time, everyone had already walked out the door.

The corridor was rather dim. Since it was daytime, the lights weren't on, lending it a strangely eerie atmosphere.

Guo Jimei, at the rear of the group, looked terrified. She kept clutching Keke, who was beside her, as if afraid she herself might suddenly vanish.

Just then, as if she had seen something, she suddenly let out a scream.

What's wrong? Gu Mian turned his head to look.

Guo Jimei was staring, her face aghast, at the nearest doorway. Even Keke beside her was staring intently at the same spot with a similar horrified expression.

The door wasn't closed properly; it was ajar, leaving a small gap.

Gu Mian took a couple of steps back before he could see what lay in the gap of the door.

It was a pair of feet.

Feet splayed out on the floor, as if someone had collapsed there.

Passing by in the corridor, one could just see these two feet through the crack in the door.

Chu Changge also walked over and silently observed what lay in the gap of the door.

At that moment, Keke spoke softly, "Those are Yuan Qinghua's shoes, I remember them!"

Yuan Qinghua? Gu Mian turned his head to look into the room again. How could the missing Yuan Qinghua be here?

007 was closest to that door.

Frowning, 007 ignored Li Yibai's attempts from nearby to dissuade her and reached out to gently push the door.

There was no bloody scene behind the door.

Only a pale-faced person lying on the white floor, her eyes tightly closed, as if she had been unconscious for a long time.

It was Yuan Qinghua.

Seeing the person behind the door, Guo Jimei stumbled back a large step, almost completely hiding behind Keke. "She's the ghost!"

For the moment, no one paid her any heed.

Yue Nu frowned. "Did anyone check this room when we came?"

Li Yibai craned his neck slightly. "Back then, we only heard Guo Jimei screaming and rushed straight to the equipment room. Who had time to look around?"

Seeing that no one was paying attention to her, Guo Jimei raised her voice, a defensive tone creeping in, "She's the ghost! We have to vote her out this round!"

Her expression was a mix of confusion and terror, as if she didn't understand why no one agreed with her.

Perhaps it was because Guo Jimei's voice was too loud.

On the ground, Yuan Qinghua stirred, as if the noise had woken her.

Then, the eyes on her somewhat pale face fluttered open. She looked around in confusion, freezing when she saw Gu Mian and the others. "Why are you all here?"

"No... that's not right," she seemed to realize something was off about her location. "Why am I here?"

Despite a few minor incidents, everyone who could be gathered had finally assembled.

Gu Mian and the others first explained the current situation to Yuan Qinghua and recapped the events of the previous night.

Yuan Qinghua remained somewhat dazed, listening as if in a fog.

Meanwhile, Guo Jimei adamantly insisted that Yuan Qinghua was the ghost. She refused to go near her at all costs and even wanted to run away, but didn't dare to go alone.

With these two girls, who were clearly going to be a handful, the group then went to look for the empty classroom where they had played the game a week prior.

Chu Changge had suggested this, saying they might find some clues about their identities in that classroom.

Everyone agreed, as the current clues were pitifully few, and there weren't many other places worth investigating.

「By the time Gu Mian and his group reached the classroom, it was already 12:30 PM.」

The empty classroom seemed rarely visited; even the tables retained the arrangement from when they had played the game—

Eight tables were pushed together to form a long one, surrounded by twelve chairs.

It was a room well-suited for meetings.

By now, Gu Mian had already plopped down onto one of the chairs.

The others, however, didn't seem as relaxed.

Yue Nu stood by the window, arms crossed, her expression grave and laden with worry.

007, meanwhile, was deflecting Li Yibai's expressions of concern.

Yuan Qinghua, still looking bewildered, casually sat down opposite Gu Mian.

Guo Jimei had dragged Keke to the corner farthest from Yuan Qinghua. Gu Mian could even hear mutters of "She's the ghost!" drifting from that direction.

Chu Changge, on the other hand, sat down next to Gu Mian, showing no particular reaction.

Among the living, only Zhang Pingfan and Pan Yue weren't here.

And there were still three ghosts.

Among the eight people present, at least one was a ghost!

After a few seconds, seeing that no one else was making a move, Gu Mian tapped the table and said, "Speak up."

His voice drew everyone's attention.

The first to speak was Yuan Qinghua, who sat opposite him, still wearing an utterly bewildered expression. "Say what?"

"What did you and Guo Jimei do last night?" The ghost had already made its move last night, so he had to start his questions from there.

Yuan Qinghua, Guo Jimei, and Zhang Pingfan, who hadn't been present, couldn't be ruled out as suspects either.

Moreover, Li Wentao had inexplicably received an extra vote the previous night. One of these three must have been observing from the shadows; that extra vote definitely came from a ghost.

Yuan Qinghua wore a peculiar expression. "Li Yibai already asked us this today... Last night, we were just sleeping. But we woke up in the middle of the night and saw paper and a pen next to our pillows. We didn't think much of it and went back to sleep. We only saw what was on the paper when we woke up the next day..."

"So you're saying you didn't vote last night, right?"

Yuan Qinghua nodded. "Yes."

"The paper?" Gu Mian suddenly extended his hand. "You were supposed to vote with pen and paper. If you voted, it would be on the paper. Show it to me so I can confirm whether you really didn't vote."

Yuan Qinghua paused, slightly stunned, then reached into her pocket. "Here it is."

Then she took out a neatly folded piece of paper.

Gu Mian took it and quickly scanned it.

The content was similar to what the mechanical voice had announced the previous night, but this paper specified that the vote had to be written down with a pen.

Yuan Qinghua hadn't written anything down.

Gu Mian then turned to Guo Jimei in the corner. "What about yours?"

Guo Jimei also looked stunned and muttered defensively, "Why would I carry something like that around with me all the time?"

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At once, everyone turned their gazes towards Guo Jimei.

Even Yuan Qinghua had a strange expression.

Seeing everyone looking at her, Guo Jimei immediately defended herself nervously, "When I saw that paper this morning, I was just surprised... I thought it might be someone's prank, because a lot of people knew we were playing that game..."

"So, this morning, I didn't pay much attention to it and just left it in the dorm... But Yuan Qinghua," Guo Jimei continued, looking warily at Yuan Qinghua, "why would you carry something like that with you?"

Wind blew in from the window.

Yuan Qinghua sat against the light. A few strands of her hair, caught by the breeze, partially obscured her face. She tucked her long hair behind her ear. "Zhang Pingfan disappeared, didn't he? We've been trying to find him for the past few days. This morning, I saw a paper just like it by my pillow, so I was a little worried."

Right, Yuan Qinghua was the class monitor of Year Two, Class Nine. It seemed she had been involved in Zhang Pingfan's disappearance since yesterday.

Unfortunately, there had been no results so far.

"Since it's in the dorm," Chu Changge suddenly said, "why don't we go back and get it now?"

Hearing this, Yue Nu looked at Chu Changge strangely.

She didn't know that Li Wentao had received an extra vote, so Chu Changge's comment seemed odd to her. "It's just a piece of paper, isn't it? Eight of us voted last night. I voted for Zhang Pingfan, and the other seven of you voted for Li Wentao..."

She trailed off, then stopped abruptly.

Even 007, who was still in the dark, paused for a moment before murmuring, "Wait, the ones who voted for Li Wentao were Gu Mian, Chu... Meiren Chu, Keke, myself, Pan Yue, and Yibai, right? He should have only received six votes, shouldn't he?"

Yue Nu had clearly realized it too. "Right! Eight people voted last night. The six of you here voted for Li Wentao, and I voted for Zhang Pingfan. That's only seven votes! So, the eighth vote must have been cast by someone other than us seven. For them to vote specifically for Li Wentao means they must have witnessed what happened last night from the shadows. The eighth vote was from the ghost!"

But as soon as she finished speaking, Gu Mian shook his head. "Not necessarily."

Yue Nu looked at Gu Mian, puzzled.

Gu Mian frowned slightly. "During the vote last night, Li Wentao, in his anger, cast his own vote for Pan Yue. So that eighth vote was Li Wentao voting for Pan Yue."

007's expression was grave. "We know eight people voted, and three abstained. Among those eight, one voted for Zhang Pingfan, one for Pan Yue, and six for Li Wentao. That's exactly eight votes... But last night, it was clearly stated that Li Wentao received seven votes. How could there be an extra vote?"

Gu Mian rubbed his chin. "We're also puzzled. But let's put aside how that extra vote came about for a moment. It's a fact that Li Wentao received seven votes. So, the ghost is very likely the person, besides the six of us, who also voted for Li Wentao."

Hearing this, Yue Nu quickly walked to the table. "No wonder you were all concerned about the paper Guo Jimei used for her vote."

She looked at Guo Jimei as she spoke. "It's noon now, and the dorms are open. We'll go back with you to get that paper."

Her tone brooked no refusal.

Guo Jimei hesitated for a moment, then said, "I'm not going with *her*."

She was referring to Yuan Qinghua.

Yuan Qinghua still seemed a bit bewildered, apparently not understanding why Guo Jimei had suddenly adopted such an attitude towards her.

"Alright," 007 stepped forward. "I'll go back with you."

Li Yibai watched Guo Jimei warily, then turned to 007. "Should I go with you too?"

Boys weren't allowed in the girls' dormitory, so if Li Yibai went, he could only wait downstairs.

Even though it was daytime, being alone was still somewhat dangerous; after all, the ghost could separate them at any moment.

Just then, Yue Nu, who was nearby, suddenly spoke up. "Splitting up is indeed not to our advantage. How about this: we all go. Lin Qi and I will go with Guo Jimei to her dorm to get the item. The rest of you can wait downstairs. Once we have it, we'll come back here to decide what to do next."

It wasn't that they had any particular attachment to this classroom, insisting they had to return here to make decisions. Rather, besides this place, the group had no other base of operations. Students and teachers were everywhere, and it would be too conspicuous for them to gather and discuss things openly.

No one objected.

The group immediately started walking out.

It was already past twelve-thirty. The academic building was empty of students; the corridors and staircases were completely silent.

They quickly reached the dormitory building.

But just as they arrived downstairs at the dormitory, Yue Nu suddenly frowned. "Oh, right. Pan Yue has been missing this whole time, hasn't she? I just remembered something... Last night, when I was leaving the classroom, I thought I saw Pan Yue writing in a diary. Could she have been writing in it these past few days?"

007 asked, puzzled, "Are you saying she might have written her identity in her diary?"

"The chances are slim, but even if there's a slight possibility, we have to take it." Yue Nu looked at 007.

007 nodded slightly. "Okay, then after we get the item, we'll go back to the classroom and look for Pan Yue's diary."

But as soon as 007 finished speaking, Yue Nu immediately said, "It's not that much trouble. It'll be quick. I'll go get it now."

"Now?" 007 frowned.

"True, going alone isn't ideal, but the ghost doesn't kill during the day, and it's still a long way from 8:00 p.m... You guys go on up. I'll be back by the time you come down." As Yue Nu spoke, she turned and, before anyone else could say anything, ran off towards the academic building.

Gu Mian watched Yue Nu's retreating figure. He had a feeling she wasn't really going to get a diary.

007 also had a puzzled expression, but she didn't waste any time. She then turned to Guo Jimei, who was beside her. "Well then, shall we go up?"

Guo Jimei nodded. "Mm."

Indeed, Yue Nu wasn't going to get any diary.

She sprinted all the way back to the classroom they had just been in, went around the long table formed by eight desks, and headed straight for the window.

There was nothing remarkable to see outside the window. What caught the eye was the radiator on the wall beneath the window.

Panting heavily, she bent down and then pulled something out of her pocket.

It was a cell phone!

That was the advantage of being a day student; she could bring whatever she wanted to school.

She didn't hesitate. She immediately turned on the video recording function, pointed the phone's camera outward, and slowly slid it into the radiator.

It was September, and the heating hadn't been turned on yet, so there was no worry of the phone overheating and exploding.

"If I put it here, I can see almost the entire classroom, and it'll be hidden. Once it's inside, it'll hardly be discovered..." Yue Nu muttered to herself as she slowly pushed the phone further in. "If things go smoothly, my plan can be realized tonight."

She had deliberately gathered everyone she could and then returned alone, precisely because she was afraid the ghost would find out what she was doing.

She was alone in the empty classroom. The sound of the phone scraping against the radiator was exceptionally clear, echoing continuously in the vast room.

But just then, she suddenly felt the hairs on the back of her neck stand up.

It felt as if something was right behind her, staring.