

Collapse 49

Chapter 49: Today's Title_1

Having asked all the questions, Gu Mian and the team separately visited the residents near the plastic factory. They learned that the area was indeed once a textile factory.

Yuwen Hao, sorting the information in his hands, said, "Originally, the Mingliang Plastic Factory site was a wasteland. In 1978, with the implementation of the reform and open-door policy, industrial development surged, and the Shenghong Textile Factory was established.

"Then, by 1990, the reform of state-owned enterprises led to a nationwide wave of layoffs. Numerous factories couldn't survive and declared bankruptcy.

"The Shenghong Textile Factory was one of them; it went bankrupt in 1991.

"A year later, in 1992, the site was bought by someone else. The already small textile factory was demolished, and a new plastic factory was built in its place—what is now the Mingliang Plastic Factory.

"The Mingliang Plastic Factory was completed that same year and began operations immediately. However, after only three years, a fire broke out—you know the one, the fire that burned Yu Hai to death."

Gu Mian nodded, aware of the rest of the story.

In 1995, a fire broke out in the Mingliang Plastic Factory. Yu Hai was burned to death in the row of offices. Those offices were later razed, and a new workshop was built on the site. Zhao Wen and Zhou Guanglei worked in these newly built workshops.

Presumably, Yu Hai's spirit had been lingering on that land and subsequently began to haunt Zhao Wen and Zhou Guanglei.

Yuwen Hao looked at the papers in his hand and said, "I found out that the original Shenghong Textile Factory also experienced a fire, in which a woman was burned to death."

He couldn't find detailed information about it, as it had happened more than a decade ago. The residents in the vicinity had changed many times over the years, and nobody knew the circumstances of that period.

"I heard someone say that a residential building for the factory's staff was built near the textile factory back then. If it's still there, we might be able to find some of the old employees from the textile factory." Yuwen Hao hunched his shoulders uneasily.

Despite the sun blazing high overhead, he felt a chill all over his body. The feeling of being watched hadn't faded; in fact, it had intensified.

Qing Huan also kept looking back, constantly sensing something clinging to him.

Huang Yu was doing better; he hadn't dared to go near the telephone, so he hadn't received any terrifying calls that day.

Gu Mian looked at the two pale-faced individuals and asked, "Why are you two reacting so strongly today?"

They hadn't been this pale yesterday.

Yuwen Hao shook his head slightly. "I'm a bit scared. Although I can't see it, I feel like it's getting very close. It's as if, if I close my eyes and open them again, it'll be right on my face."

Qing Huan also spoke slowly, "I feel the same... I don't know why, but I feel like the thing following us is moving faster today..."

As he spoke, he glanced back uneasily again, but there was nothing behind him.

Seeing this, Gu Mian stroked his chin and said, "Maybe it's because we're close to finding the source."

It seemed that finding the source of the curse was indeed useful. Otherwise, the Evil Ghost following them wouldn't have sped up.

"Let's find that residential building quickly," Gu Mian said, looking up at the high sun. "Otherwise, at this rate, you'll all be wiped out tonight."

Yuwen Hao quickly took out a piece of paper and said, "Nobody knew where the residential building was. A local resident said he vaguely remembered it, so he drew a map from memory for me. Take a look."

Gu Mian looked at the map in his hand.

The map was rather crude, filled with boxes representing buildings.

A line snaked between the boxes, ending at a small 'X'.

I used to draw maps like this in elementary school. Gu Mian thought.

He pointed at the largest box on the map. "This should be the plastic factory. The line starts from here. Let me see... this direction is... west. We head west."

By then, the sun was already beginning to set in the west. Without any delay, they quickly headed west.

On the way, Huang Yu couldn't help but ask, "If we find the source of the curse, what should we do?" The crucial question was how to stop the Evil Ghost's pursuit.

Yuwen Hao answered hesitantly, "I'm not sure. Maybe we need to pay respects to this source, or perhaps fulfill its unfulfilled wishes from when it was alive?"

Clearly, Yuwen Hao had been heavily influenced by contemporary ghost stories.

Gu Mian had read a handful of ghost stories with a common trope: a ghost kills, the protagonist survives, investigates, and uncovers the ghost's grievances. Then, while being hunted by the Evil Ghost, the protagonist helps the ghost achieve justice. Touched by the protagonist's actions, the ghost finally reincarnates.

These were all very positive ghost stories. The less positive ones were usually 404'd by some mysterious force.

Gu Mian found these positive ghost stories quite unreliable and unrealistic.

If a real ghost wanted to kill him, he certainly wouldn't help it seek justice. Instead, he would do whatever it took to saw its head off.

I don't care what terrible injustice you suffered when you were alive; if you want to kill innocent me, then of course I can't let you off the hook! That was Gu Mian's thinking.

The group followed the map for nearly half an hour, pausing intermittently to confirm their turns, and finally stopped in front of a large building.

Yuwen Hao looked up at the building and said, "This should be it."

It was a very old, yellow-painted building. The top of the building was trimmed with a faint pink stripe. A sign hung in front of the main entrance: "Hongsheng Apartment."

It looked very familiar. That was right—this was where Gu Mian lived.

Qing Huan was also stunned. He had been here with Gu Mian before and naturally knew that Gu Mian lived here.

Yuwen Hao looked at the two of them, his expression puzzled. "What's wrong with you two?"

Gu Mian glanced at him. "I live here."

Yuwen Hao was clearly taken aback by this. He asked incredulously, "You live here?"

"That's right. I live here."

As Gu Mian spoke, he stepped into the building's corridor. He had visited the landlady's apartment just yesterday, so he knew the way well.

When the white-haired landlady saw Gu Mian again, she was still a little surprised. "Xiao Gu, why are you here again? And you've brought so many people..."