

Global Collapse

Chapter 7: Chapter 7: Sleep Early, Prevent Sudden Death_1

By the time Fatty and Chu Changge returned to the office, Gu Mian was already seated at his desk, a report peeled from the wall laid out in front of him.

He had bent the iron bars of the gate and squeezed out to retrieve it.

Looking up at the returning pair, he asked, "Find anything?"

Chu Changge took a seat. "We found a storeroom at the end of the corridor on the top floor—the sixth floor—of this building. It looks like a utility room of some sort, but it's locked up tight."

"The storeroom's door seems to have been replaced; it's much newer than the other doors. However, the gap in the door frame is black, as though it had been burned by fire."

Burned by fire?

Gu Mian paused, then pushed the report on the table towards Chu Changge. "Take a look at this."

Chu Changge and Fatty both leaned in to look at the report.

"Fire Investigation Report for Grade 8, Class 4..."

"Location of fire: Storeroom, sixth floor, teaching building. Date: Night of November 26, 2008. Cause: Arson. According to the investigation, this was a premeditated case of arson and murder."

"Twenty-nine people perished in the fire, including twenty-eight students and one teacher."

"All twenty-eight students belonged to Grade 8, Class 4. The deceased teacher, Zhang Ping, was the homeroom teacher of Grade 8, Class 4."

"Besides the twenty-eight deceased students, the last survivor from Grade 8, Class 4 went missing that night. Anyone who sees this student should report to the police immediately."

Below it, there was a picture of a girl with a bob haircut, pale skin, and large eyes. She truly looked like a rabbit.

Underneath the picture, a line of small print read: "The missing student above is Lin Yanan."

"Lin Yanan?" Chu Changge stared at the picture. "This is the student you were referring to."

Gu Mian nodded. "Yep, the one who didn't show up for class."

The report didn't state that Lin Yanan had died, only that she had gone missing on the night of the incident. In other words, only one teacher and twenty-eight students had perished in the fire.

"Well, this is strange," Fatty also became puzzled. "The instance's mission is for us to teach twenty-nine resentful spirits, so there should be twenty-nine dead students, right?"

Chu Changge adjusted his glasses. "Then there's only one possibility. This Lin Yanan must have died somewhere else and turned into a ghost, but her body was hidden and hasn't been found to this day."

Moreover, it was highly likely Lin Yanan had also died within this school.

"I have two conjectures right now—" Chu Changge continued.

"My first conjecture: the other twenty-eight people killed Lin Yanan and hid her body. Then, she returned as an Evil Ghost to take revenge."

"But an Evil Ghost has many ways to kill. There's no need to go to such lengths to gather them all and burn them to death. So, I'm actually more inclined towards my second conjecture."

"My second conjecture: the murderer was the living Lin Yanan. After being ostracized by everyone and repressed for a long time, she suddenly snapped, setting a fire that burned everyone alive. The dead then returned as resentful spirits seeking revenge and killed Lin Yanan."

"But if my second conjecture is true, I can't explain why the resentful spirits would hide the body after killing her."

"Plus, regardless of which conjecture it is, I can't figure out the significance of this teacher, Zhang Ping."

This instance is really a brain-drainer. Gu Mian felt his brain cells dying off in droves.

He rubbed his forehead. "Actually, we don't need to overcomplicate things. We could just grab a student and torture them for information. I reckon they'd spill the beans right away."

Chu Changge didn't even raise an eyelid. "If you're going to court death, don't drag me down with you."

Fatty flinched. "Dr. Gu, are you... serious?"

Of course, I'm serious...

However, Gu Mian didn't say this out loud. He just idly drummed his fingers on the table. "Alright, you two continue your deductions. Do you need me to go find more clues?"

Chu Changge, who had taken out a pen at some point, said, "We've searched the entire teaching building. Apart from the storeroom on the sixth floor, there's nothing particularly unusual. Right now, I mainly want to look for clues in the dormitory."

The dormitory building was located opposite the teaching building, with a large playground separating them.

However, Gu Mian had seen that the dormitory building was locked. A timetable posted on the main door stated that it would only be opened after four in the afternoon.

He didn't know who would unlock the dormitory door, but since this was an instance, there was no need to fuss over such details.

As these thoughts ran through his mind, he glanced at the digital clock on the table. It was now two-thirty in the afternoon.

Xun Li had already gone to teach his history class and should be back sometime after three. *Though whether he'd return alive was another question.*

Meanwhile, the other two female players were sitting side-by-side on the playground's track, seemingly reluctant to enter the eerie teaching building.

Time flew by, and it wasn't long before Xun Li, the history teacher, returned.

Fatty had been waiting to see him make a fool of himself, but unexpectedly, the tall young man showed no signs of fear upon his return. Instead, he took the opportunity to mercilessly taunt Fatty.

"Seeing you crawl back this morning, scared out of your wits, I thought those things were terrifying. But after I went, I realized they only dare to pick on the weak."

"The moment I stood on the podium, not a single one of them dared to utter a sound, let alone play any games like 'pass the flower.' They all sat there and listened to the class seriously."

"I initially wondered how terrifying this horror game could be, but seeing it now, it's not all that much!"

It appeared that this one had made it through the class quite safely.

Fatty was so red-faced from the taunting that he looked like he wanted the earth to swallow him whole.

「Night fell quickly.」

He had no idea how time worked in this instance. The sky was already dimming by a little after four o'clock.

By five, the entire sky had transformed into a deep, inky blue.

The dormitory building was slightly drier than the teaching building; at least the windows here were intact.

Just inside the main entrance was a deep corridor, like the throat of a monster. A solitary lamp hanging overhead cast a weak, orange-yellow glow, flickering intermittently.

The dormitory corridor was rather narrow, approximately two meters wide, and it felt crowded walking side-by-side with Fatty.

By now, the twenty-odd resentful spirits had also returned to their dormitories, though they all lived on the fourth floor.

The teachers' dorms, however, were on the first floor.

In the dim, narrow corridor, Gu Mian had only taken a few steps before he spotted a dormitory door labeled with his name.

"104," he read out the room number.

Two people shared each teachers' dormitory, and Gu Mian's roommate was the history teacher, Xun Li.

The two female players shared one dormitory, and Chu Changge and Fatty shared another.

It was worth noting that the door of Room 102, right next to Gu Mian's dormitory, had a familiar name posted on it: Zhang Ping.

But the door was locked, so he couldn't get in.

Gu Mian had no choice but to give up on that for now and inspect his own dormitory first.

The teachers' dormitory was quite simple, featuring a balcony, two beds, and a large table.

The table was placed between the two beds, and two thermoses sat on the floor.

The curtains were already drawn, leaving a small slit in the middle through which the ink-colored sky was visible.

Xun Li plopped down on his bed and let out a huge yawn. "This experience is so realistic! I actually feel drowsy in here."

As he spoke, he grew excited again, seemingly eager to show off. "Actually, you were scared too when you went to teach this morning, weren't you? I heard you were so frightened you ran back before class even ended."

"Really, there's no need to be so scared. Just learn from me. Be a bit tougher, and they won't dare to do anything. Those ghosts, they only go after the timid ones..."

Xun Li stopped abruptly mid-sentence, realizing that Gu Mian wasn't listening to him at all but was instead staring intently in one direction.

He followed Gu Mian's gaze.

Through the gap in the curtains, a ghastly pale face was pressed against the window, staring right at him.