

Horrors 111

Chapter 111: Getting Closer

Chen Ge and Doctor Gao were silent for a long time. Washing the head meant washing away bad luck and dirt. In dream theory, it meant a good thing was about to happen, but what Men Nan described had nothing good about it; it sounded like a nightmare.

“Can you still remember the face of the person in your dream and your surroundings?”

Men Nan was most likely the special visitor mentioned by the black phone. Therefore, the choice Chen Ge made could influence the final reward.

“The dream feels like it happened inside my rental’s bathroom; the placement of the things looked familiar, but I am not so sure.” Men Nan pushed down his head, and his voice weakened even more. “I haven’t been able to get a good look of the person standing beside me, but I am certain he is getting closer to me. These few weeks, I have been having the same dream, and with each passing night, the dream keeps getting clearer, and I have a clearer view of the man’s face.”

“What does he look like?”

“Soon, in the next dream, I will be able to see his face,” Men Nan said with his head lowered. When he spoke, only his pupils moved upwards; it looked creepy. What the young man said was very vague; there was no worthwhile information.

Chen Ge did not give up and continued to press him. “Can you give me more details? For instance, what was the man up to when you were washing your head? Or has he said anything?”

“The content of the dream is almost always the same.” Men Nan’s raw voice was shaking. “When I had this dream for the first time three weeks ago, it wasn’t that scary. In the dream, I woke up in the middle of the night to enter the bathroom. There were no thoughts in my mind then, and my body was merely moving on its own. It felt like some foreign force had taken over me.

“Initially the dream was fuzzy. I stopped before the mirror to fill up the basin with water before putting my head into it. When I bent over with my head lowered, I could see someone standing at the front door upside-down.

“At the beginning, he was standing far away from me. It was not until I finished washing my head that I realized he seem to have moved closer but only just a little bit.

“After the dream was over, I had other dreams, so I didn’t pay it much attention initially. But the next day, I had the same dream again!

“Everything was the same. I walked into the bathroom, stood before the mirror, filled the basin with water, and then bent over to put my head into the water. When my hair touched the surface of the water, I could see someone standing in the living room. When I was done, the person once again moved closer to me.

“The same dream kept repeating. Initially, it felt like every other dream, but as it repeated itself, everything became clearer and clearer. My brain was moving during the dream, and my senses were active, but the key issue was the man who came in from the door inched closer to me with each dream!

“In my dream, I’m scared out of my wits, but I simply cannot wake up. The moment I fall asleep, the dream continues. In the dream two and a half weeks ago, the man entered the living room; one week ago, the man appeared next to the toilet. In the dream four days ago, the man appeared beside me!

“He was standing beside me. The moment I bent down to push my head into the water, his body would lean alongside me with the fuzzy face inching closer.”

Chen Ge had chills just from Men Nan’s description. He could not imagine the trauma for the young man who had experienced it personally. Having the same dream for three weeks with an unclear man inching closer, no wonder he ended up in this state.

“The night before last, I had the same dream again, and it was also the last time.” Men Nan tried to raise his head, and Chen Ge saw that his eyes were darting about rapidly. “The man’s face was so close that I thought I could take a good look, but at that moment, he used his hands to strangle my neck. Then, I woke up, and I haven’t gone back to bed since then.”

Men Nan’s situation was dire. The man in his dream was strangling him. If the dream was allowed to continue, who knew what would have happened. No wonder Doctor Gao came to Chen Ge; he was probably the last resort.

“Repetitious dream you say... and they are all in the bathroom.” Chen Ge thought about it and said, “Could it be a problem with the apartment itself? I’m just stating a possibility, so don’t be afraid.”

“Go on.”

“Is it possible that someone died in the room you rented, and the body hasn’t been discovered, so the person appears in your dream, hoping you will call the police on his behalf?”

When Chen Ge finished, Men Nan’s face was green. He took in a very deep breath. “There’s a body hiding in my room? Impossible!”

His emotions started to go haywire. If not for Doctor Gao’s hands on his shoulders, his illness probably would have kicked in. Doctor Gao added with a curious expression, “I’ve been to his rental room and examined the place inside out; there is nothing weird about it. Furthermore, one week ago, I did invite Men Nan to stay with me. He still experienced the same dream; it did not stop due to a change in location.”

“When he had the dream for the first time, the man was standing at the front door, so the man probably came from the outside. This means that we cannot limit our investigation to Men Nan’s room. We should expand the scope of investigation to include the whole apartment building.” Chen Ge gave his opinion. Afraid of provoking Men Nan, he did not give the latter part of his suspicion. The ghost had probably attached itself to Men Nan, so it could not be solved by sleeping elsewhere.

“We are not police, so we don’t have the right to search the rest of the building.” Doctor Gao now had second thoughts about coming to Chen Ge. “We should focus on analyzing this dream. Men Nan kept

repeating the action of washing his hair—perhaps we will be able to discover something if we understand what that action stands for.”

Doctor Gao tried to advise Chen Ge, and Chen Ge did listen to the doctor’s explanation patiently, but his speculation could not explain why Men Nan kept having the same dream.

“I can’t be sure for now, so why don’t we see what happens tonight? How about we go to Men Nan’s apartment? Perhaps a new pair of eyes might bring some new discoveries.” Chen Ge waited patiently for them to answer. He put his hands into his pockets—from the special visitor alert until now, the black phone had not reacted.

Chapter 112: Sounds Familiar

Doctor Gao seemed to have his own reservations. “I’m afraid Men Nan might not be able to survive until tonight; his condition is getting worse.”

With his head lowered, Men Nan maintained his weird posture. His pupils darting about but completely silent.

“But there’s no better option.” Chen Ge knew what Doctor Gao wanted to say. “His condition is completely different from Wang Xin’s, so I’m helpless as well. But if you trust me, let me go to his apartment to take a look tonight, and perhaps I will find something. Other than that, I have another question to ask him.”

Chen Ge walked to Men Nan’s side and slowly used his hand to swipe above the young man’s head and spine.

“What are you doing?” Doctor Gao was confounded.

“Doctor Gao, have you noticed that regardless of whether he was talking or walking, he kept his head lowered—it felt like there was something pressing on him on his skull.” Chen Ge had noticed this a long time ago, but he did not have the chance to enquire about it. “Men Nan, don’t you think it’s difficult to maintain a posture like that?”

Reminded by Chen Ge, Doctor Gao patted Men Nan on his back. “Are you still feeling uncomfortable?”

Men Nan waved his hands, but he kept his head lowered. Standing for quite some time in the crowd seemed to have taken a toll on him; he looked like he could lose control at any moment. Noticing this, Doctor Gao quickly led Men Nan to a darker location for him to rest.

The frequency at which Men Nan’s pupils move about is not normal. He kept looking around him, and he has a habit of rolling his pupils upwards like he is trying to see above his head.

Chen Ge looked at Men Nan’s shadow, and the more he looked at the young man, the more confused he felt. If one was naturally a little bit hunchback, one’s spine would be arched, but Men Nan’s back was straight, and only his head fell downwards. It gave the impression that there was something heavy sitting on his head.

Washing his head, why would he experience dream like that?

There was still no reaction from the black phone. Chen Ge ignored it. A special visitor was an additional bonus; it was good if he could get it, but he would not feel bad if he did not either. After sending away two batches of visitors, Men Nan's situation improved. Doctor Gao was indeed an expert at counselling. Men Nan, who appeared like he was going to lose his mind, became sedated and calm around Doctor Gao.

He led Men Nan to see Chen Ge again. They seemed to have come to a decision, "8 pm tonight. We will see you at Hai Ming Apartments."

"Okay," Chen Ge promised, and the black phone vibrated. "Let him fall asleep normally tonight, and I will keep a vigil over him."

"I'll accompany you." Doctor Gao thanked Chen Ge before leaving with Men Nan.

Yet another weird case. Chen Ge roughly grasped the meaning of special visitor; they weren't ghosts per se but people trapped in the line between the two worlds. As soon as they left, he checked the black phone.

"The second special visitor has left. Through your effort, you have unlocked the mission information! Unlocked Hidden Trial Mission—A Room of Three.

"A Room of Three (1 Star Scream Factor): Arrive at Hai Ming Apartment before midnight and find out the reason behind the special visitor's illness.

"Mission Venue: Hai Ming Apartment Room 303.

"Mission Hint: He came from the Third Sick Hall.

"Do you want to accept the mission? Warning: The Trial Mission is only active for twenty-four hours. If you do not accept it within this time limit, it'll be taken as forfeit, and this scenario will stay locked forever."

Chen Ge did not pay much attention to this hidden mission, at least not until he saw the mission hint.

It's related to the Third Sick Hall? He came from the Third Sick Hall? Men Nan has been treated inside the Third Sick Hall?

Reading the mission details again, Chen Ge found a more curious coincidence; the number three was repeated many times. *Could this be a coincidence? But what is the meaning of this Room of Three?*

Either two ghosts were living in Men Nan, or Chen Ge, Doctor Gao, and Men Nan would make up the three in the room. In any case, since it was related to a three-star scenario, Chen Ge did not dare to be too careless. He memorized the mission details and made sure he did not miss anything before putting away the black phone.

He contacted Xu Wan to have her sell tickets while Chen Ge entered the Murder by Midnight scenario to act as the ghost. There was no accident. During lunch break, Chen Ge did not join Xu Wan at the canteen, but he moved alone to the park office.

After discovering the presence of Director Luo's daughter, Chen Ge had a few questions for Director Luo. He took the elevator to the top floor. The door to Director Luo's office was open; the man did not seem

to like the idea of trapping himself in an enclosed room. Chen Ge knocked on the door lightly, and Director Luo soon came out to greet him, carrying several reports in his hands.

“Director Luo, I have a few questions for you, do you have some time?”

Director Luo put the reports down. “Problems with the underground parking lot?”

“No, it’s not that but something else.” Chen Ge placed Luo Ruoyu’s bracelet and the paper left behind by his parents on Director Luo’s desk. “These are the things I found in the underground parking lot beside a support beam.”

“What is it that you wish to know?” Director Luo recognized the bracelet. “There are plenty of toys left in unnoticeable corners around the park. I left them there personally.”

“Why would you do that?”

“All the toys are my daughter’s favorites. I placed them around the park so that when she returned, she would not feel so lonely.”

“Then did you place other things alongside the toys, like this?” Chen Ge pushed the bloodied note to Director Luo.

Director Luo shook his head after looking at it twice. “I have no recollection of this; it wasn’t me.”

After getting the answer from Director Luo, Chen Ge was slightly disappointed. He had assumed that, as the director of New Century Park, Director Luo would know a thing or two about his parents’ disappearance, but he was wrong. Director Luo did not even know about his own daughter’s return to the park; his parents seemed to have hidden a lot of secrets.

“Then, I’m sorry for disturbing you.” Chen Ge picked up the note and prepared to leave.

“Wait a minute!” Director Luo stood up slowly and signaled for Chen Ge to show him the note. “This is your father’s handwriting, isn’t it?”

“Yes, you can recognize it?” Chen Ge was surprised; not everyone would pay attention to people’s handwriting.

“The Third Sick Hall...” Director Luo read the words on the paper before confirming. “Right before your parents disappeared, I heard them mention this place.”

Chapter 113: A Brave Idea

“You heard them mention that?” Chen Ge’s interest was piqued.

“Yes, the day before your parents’ disappearance, they came to me, saying someone wanted to give me a present. However, due to various complications, said person could not be there and thus entrusted the task to them.” Director Luo took a wooden box from the nearby bookshelf. After opening the box, it revealed a roughly-hewn roly-poly toy.

He held the toy in his palm. "Even though the making is rough, I appreciate the meaning. No matter the difficulty, it will stand up again."

Chen Ge was anxious, and he urged, "What did my parents say after that? Where did you hear those few words?"

"Your parents left after they gave me the gift. Since I have a habit of not closing my office door, I accidentally overheard their conversation in the corridor." Director Luo thought to himself before continuing. "At the time, they had not wandered far from the door. Your father said something like... 'The door to the Third Sick Hall has been opened again.' And your mother replied, 'The door wasn't closed in the first place.'"

"That's it?"

"That's all I could hear. They did continue the conversation, but I could not hear them clearly."

After chatting for a few more minutes and confirming that there was nothing more Director Luo could give him, Chen Ge exited his office.

The door to the Third Sick Hall has to be something more than a literal door, could it be similar to the door in the Haunted House's mirror? Could there be another world behind the door?

He could not understand why his parents would say something like that. He pulled out the black phone to read the mission hint again.

It said 'he' came from the Third Sick Hall. Does it mean that he came from the bloody world, similar to the mirror monster?

The day before their disappearance, Chen Ge's parents had been discussing the Third Sick Hall; did this mean that their disappearance was related to it?

He knew that his parents had disappeared around an abandoned hospital. The police had searched all the nearby buildings but found nothing. Now, Chen Ge suspected that his parents had entered the door and travelled to the other world.

It's still too soon to confirm the mission venue for the Third Sick Hall is the hospital that my parents disappeared in. Chen Ge patted his face lightly to force himself to calm down. Since it was related to his parents, his emotions were unsettled. The mission has three stars, so it must be dangerous. Even if I accept it now, I might not be able to complete it. I'd better focus on the immediate mission for now.

The Trial Mission at Hai Ming Apartments was related to the Third Sick Hall. Completing this mission would provide more understanding of the Third Sick Hall, so it was not a bad place to start.

At 4 pm, the number of visitors slowed. Chen Ge handed the key to the Haunted House to Xu Wan, and he crawled into the props room to prepare for the Trial Mission that night. The doll left behind by his parents was the park's guardian spirit, so it was only useful inside the park. Therefore, Chen Ge did not bring it along with him this time.

Looking at his choices, Chen Ge eventually settled on the phone charger, lighter, safety rope, and the incredibly handy multi-purpose mallet.

That should be enough. He thought about it before shoving the reward money that he had left from the Ping An Apartment case into his backpack. *It's early. Perhaps I should go to the mannequin shop first. If the price is right, I can directly give the down payment.*

The quicker he finished Mu Yang High School's Hidden Mission, the earlier he would reap the reward. After some cleaning up, when Chen Ge passed the dressing room, he accidentally saw Xiaoxiao, who was hiding behind the door. The fake blood was splattered all over the floor, and there was some on Xiaoxiao as well.

"What are you doing?" Chen Ge picked up Xiaoxiao and asked Xu Wan to help clean the place before returning to the staff breakroom. *A roomful of fake blood, Xu Wan must have thought it was my handiwork. Will she think her boss has lost his mind?*

Chen Ge used a towel to wipe the fake blood off Xiaoxiao's body. He pinched her face, threatening, "If you continue to be naughty, I'll..."

He was stuck because he could not figure out what Xiaoxiao was afraid of. Eventually, he huffed and shoved Xiaoxiao into his backpack as well. After everything was ready, Chen Ge exited the Haunted House and the park.

The park visitor number was dwindling, and the open air carpark was empty. There was not even a line at the bus stop.

Maintaining the park requires plenty of money; with so few visitors, it mustn't be easy for Director Luo.

After crossing the road, Chen Ge looked for the mannequin workshop using the information on the internet.

He saw the sign hanging above a door that led underground. When he asked the hawker on the street, Chen Ge was told that the workshop was underground.

Walking down the steps, the walls on both sides were covered in scrawling that he could not appreciate, and at the end of the step was a glass door with the sign 'FOR RENT/SALE'.

"Is anyone in?" Chen Ge looked through the glass room. The interior looked like an underground storeroom; the place was huge but empty. After waiting for some time, a slightly overweight man answered the door in his slippers.

He looked roughly the same age as Chen Ge. He was in very casual attire and had some baby fat on his face. The glass door opened, and Chen Ge was blasted in the face by the air conditioning.

"You are the boss? I wish to order a set of custom-made mannequins," Chen Ge explained.

"Okay, come in." The man invited Chen Ge into the shop. "How big do you want it? If it's under thirty centimeters, you can get it under three days."

"That's too small. I want something the size of a real person, and the joints all need to be moveable; can you do something like that?" Chen Ge looked at the equipment inside the workshop; the place was more professional than it appeared on the outside.

“Similar size to a real person? With moveable parts?” Comprehension dawned for the man. With an understanding look, he asked, “How many do you want?”

“Twenty-four, when you can finish the order?” Chen Ge answered.

“Twenty-four?” the man asked in a raised pitch.

The shout scared Chen Ge. “Why are you screaming so suddenly? Is twenty-four too many for the workshop to produce?”

“All for your personal use?”

“What use would I have for the mannequins?” Chen Ge realized the man had misunderstood him, so he explained, “I own a Haunted House; the mannequins are part of the set design.”

“Okay...” The man sighed in relief. “If it’s for a Haunted House, I don’t suggest using too expensive filler. After all, the exhaustion rate is too high. We can make two types here, solid base and half-solid base. The most expensive 12,000, cheapest 3,000. Also, I have to remind you, all the workers have left, and I’ve been left alone to look after the place. So, twenty-four custom-made mannequins will probably take a month to be completed.”

Chapter 114: Hai Ming Apartments

The cheapest costs 3,000? Chen Ge coughed, and his hand moved involuntarily to the 20,000 or so in his backpack. He uttered in a calm voice, “Money is not a problem, but the new scenario will be open in a few days; I need the mannequins to be finished soon. You said that you don’t have enough employees to rush the order, but do you have the materials here?”

“I do.” The boss did not know why Chen Ge would suddenly ask that. “If you give us a few more days, I’m sure you’ll be satisfied with the result.”

“The Haunted House will open the new scenario for visitation the day after tomorrow; there can be no delay.”

“We’re not doing so well; did you not see the sign in the window? Before this, I was only responsible for the designs, and the workers would handle the rest. But since there have been no large orders, I sent them all away to save money.” The boss also did not want to give up on Chen Ge’s order so easily. “How about this, I will call the workers tonight, and I will have them rush the order for you in a week?”

“A week is still too long; I need them the day after tomorrow.”

The boss sighed helplessly. “Even if we work at full speed, I can only give you three or four mannequins the day after tomorrow.”

“You have enough materials but not the workers.” Chen Ge put down his backpack. “How about this, lend your workshop to me for twenty-four hours? You only need to prepare the materials for me.”

“Huh?”

As the conversation continued, it started to head down a weird direction. The boss did not quite react to it yet, "Then what shall I do?"

"Just stand to the side and watch." Chen Ge moved his fingers and looked around the space. "After all, it's not like you have other customers. After the place is sold, the stored materials will be disposed of or sold at a low price. Since that's the case, you might as well lease the place to me for a day. Don't worry, I will purchase the materials at market price."

The man had a point, but something felt off! The boss thought about it and realized he had nothing to lose. Looking at the excited Chen Ge, he nodded with difficulty. "Alright, but you have to give me 10,000 as deposit. I'll remove the material price from the deposit, and I'll return the rest when you're finished."

"You have a deal."

After paying the boss, Chen Ge entered the work space. The place was huge, and multiple tools covered the floor.

"You sure you want to do this yourself?" The boss was still hesitant. "If you need it, I can help. After all, I'm free."

"Then, I shall thank you in advanced." Chen Ge was familiar with the tools because he had spent his internship at a toy factory. He took a tour, and after a plan formed in his mind, he pulled out his phone to call Inspector Lee.

"Uncle Lee, I have a favor to ask; it's related to Mu Yang High School."

"The station has already closed the case. Why are you still so hung up over Mu Yang High School?" Every time Inspector Lee answered Chen Ge's call, his heart would quiver in worry, afraid that he might hear some bad news.

"It's not related to the case, I just want to..."

"Stop getting involved with the school." Inspector Lee became serious. "According to the main city's investigation, there might be a darker history there before the school was built."

"A darker history?" Chen Ge did not press him. "Inspector Lee, you misunderstood me; I don't intend to meddle in police business. Didn't you tell me that a whole class got into an accident last time? I just want to ask if you have a picture of all twenty-four students?"

"Have you lost your mind? Why do you need something like that?"

"It's very important, but I cannot tell you the reason for now. I swear it's not for malicious use." Chen Ge was planning to build bodies for the twenty-four lingering spirit to possess so that they would not be homeless anymore. In a way, he was doing a good thing.

The phone was silent for a long time before Inspector Lee said, "Don't do anything stupid! Call me if you find out anything. I'll take a look in a bit."

After hanging up the phone, Chen Ge did not think too much of it, but he scared the boss speechless. The man hesitated for some time before sidling up to Chen Ge to ask, "Are you a cop?"

“No, have you prepared the materials?”

“Yes.” Even the tone used by the boss had gotten more reverential.

“Alright, it’s time to start working.” Chen Ge and the boss went to prepare the clay first. Ten minutes later, Inspector Lee sent a group photo with twenty-six people and said it was the only picture they had in the files. There was a bespectacled senior sitting in the middle of the photo, and behind him stood twenty-five students.

“It’s a lot easier with the picture as a guide.” Chen Ge thanked the boss before asking him to move away. He carved out a rough head shape from the clay before activating his skill, Dollmaker’s Talent.

Using the different types of carving knives, Chen Ge made a human skull that was similar to the face on the picture in less than few minutes. His pair of hands were as delicate as flying butterflies as he masterfully employed the carving knives. The ease with which Chen Ge conducted his work stunned the boss; it felt like he was watching an art documentary sped up thrice.

What is this person’s actual occupation? After he was done with the carving, Chen Ge used the wet sponge to carefully wipe down the skulls. His touch was so masterful that after he wiped the dust away, a skin-like consistency appeared on the clay body.

After a while, the clay body hardened, and Chen Ge sprayed it with sticky plaster. Then, there was nothing left to do but wait. The plaster needed at least one hour to dry. Utilizing this downtime, Chen Ge went to work on something else.

After one and a half hours, Chen Ge finished all the clay bodies. Then he retrieved the first few clay bodies from the hardened plaster. He slathered them with a layer of latex, which would act as the mannequin’s skin.

After applying the latex, Chen Ge inserted a bendable stick into the clay body, this would act as the mannequin’s spine. Finally, he injected the filler. Everything was completed in one fell swoop, Chen Ge only needed ten minutes to finish one fake mannequin head.

“It’s getting late. Take this 10,000 as the deposit, and don’t touch anything in the work area. I’ll be back to finish the rest tomorrow.” Chen Ge washed his hands and planned to leave for Hai Ming Apartments.

“Don’t worry, I won’t go anywhere near them.” Looking at the twenty-four heads left on the counter, the boss shivered. He had seen many mannequins in his life, but the mannequins created by Chen Ge’s hands gave him a different impression. They were exceptionally real, like they would wink at him at any moment.

Shrugging on his backpack, Chen Ge exited the underground workshop. He hailed a cab to head toward Hai Ming Apartments. It was about time for his meeting with Doctor Gao.

Hai Ming Apartments was situated at the older part of town where the buildings were not high. After crossing several busy streets, the surroundings turned quiet. With the directions given by the taxi driver, Chen Ge finally arrived at his destination.

Chapter 115: Room 303

Chen Ge's shadow was quite long under the street light. There was not one person on the road other than the occasional street cat, which shuffled noisily across the street.

Who would have thought such a quiet street is hiding in the city? Chen Ge walked down the road between the buildings, deeper into the residential area. There was a light horrid smell in the air; the trash that littered the street had been left there for a long time. The trash spilled out of the trash bags, and some critters occasionally squirmed out from them. Compared to the few buildings that faced the road, the building Chen Ge arrived at looked more dilapidated. There were dirty stains on the building walls, and there was a lot of trash crowding the stairs.

Found it. Chen Ge looked at the six-story high apartment building. Based on the advertisement that stuck to the wall, this was the place he was looking for. *The mission venue given by the black phone was Room 303, so that should be Men Nan's room.*

Chen Ge glanced at the time; it was 7:54 pm. *It might be rather inconvenient after Doctor Gao arrives, so perhaps I should go take a look around first.*

He did not call Doctor Gao but entered the stairs directly. The ceiling of each floor was low; they were perhaps about 2.1 meters. The railings were made of iron, and at every interval, there was a piece of red string tied around it, but Chen Ge had no idea what purpose they served. After entering the building, a weird smell hit Chen Ge. It was very light, and it was not particularly smelly. Those who stayed there might have gotten used to it already, but Chen Ge was a first-time visitor, so he was sensitive to the smell.

It smells like food that has gone sour. Chen Ge stopped for a while at the first floor to search for the source of the smell but came up with nothing. The smell seemed to come from the building itself, seeping out from every brick. There was no light in the corridor, so Chen Ge took out his phone for light.

There were four rooms on the first floor, and it appeared very cramped. The sound insulation was not that perfect, so Chen Ge could hear the sound coming from within even though he stood outside.

Chen Ge snuck up to the third floor. He did not knock on the door to Room 303 but stood outside the door to listen in.

There were also four rooms on the third floor. The television in 301 was very loud. There was a man in 302 speaking on the phone, and it sounded like he was in a heated argument. Chen Ge could hear him repeat two sentences constantly—Stop forcing me. Do you two wish to push me to my death?

There was no sound coming from Room 303 and 304; they were very quiet.

After two minutes, Chen Ge tapped on the door to Room 303 lightly. Interestingly enough, when he did so, the television volume in 301 decreased, and the man in 302 got off his phone. The whole third floor became eerily quiet.

Chen Ge knocked on the door for a full minute, but there was no answer. He called out softly, "Men Nan? Are you home?"

There was no answer. Just as Chen Ge thought he had gotten the wrong address, the door to 301 opened.

An unshaven middle-aged man leaned against the frame, and the haze of alcohol formed a miasma around him. "Hey, who are you looking for?"

"Men Nan in 303, he's a student at Jiujiang Medical University. I heard he's not feeling well, so I came to visit him."

"You got the wrong place. I have no idea who this Men Nan is, but I'm sure he is not living in 303." The man scratched his face. His left cheek had been bitten by a mosquito, and the wound had been scratched until it was bleeding.

"But my friend told me he lives here." Chen Ge tried to get some information from the man. "Furthermore, you said you don't know Men Nan, so how can you be sure he doesn't live here?"

"Someone died in Room 303 before, and ever since then, the room has been vacant." The man moved his fingers before his face to look at the blood left underneath his nails. "Stop knocking on the door; it's bad luck. You hear me?"

The middle-aged man then slammed the door in his face. However, Chen Ge realized the man did not return the volume of the television back to normal. The man was probably hiding behind the door to listen to his movements.

Chen Ge did not knock on the door anymore, but he had acquired an important clue from the man. Someone had died in Room 303, and ever since that unfortunate incident, the room had remained vacant.

He had found the mission venue, so the key now was how to gain entry before midnight.

The black phone hasn't made any mistakes yet, so Men Nan's illness is probably related to this room. Chen Ge looked at his watch; it was already 8 pm, so he called Doctor Gao.

The good doctor had been afraid that Chen Ge was not able to find his way, so he had been waiting outside the residential area to meet him.

After explaining the situation on the phone, several minutes later, Doctor Gao entered the corridor with Men Nan behind him. When he saw Men Nan again, Chen Ge had a shock. The young man now looked completely different from a normal person; he looked like a naturally deformed person.

His head was practically perpendicular to his spine, it looked as if someone was pressing down hard on his head. Chen Ge pointed at the door and tossed Doctor Gao a confused look.

Doctor Gao understood what he meant and shook his head slightly. "His condition worsened. The medication helped stabilize his situation for now. Let us go in first."

Men Nan took out the key from his pocket, his head still lowered. The light in the corridor was dim. He tried multiple times, but he failed to get the key into the keyhole. His hands shook angrily, and it felt like he was going to act up again. Seeing this, Chen Ge immediately went over to help him open the door to Room 304.

When the three of them entered the room, Doctor Gao and Men Nan probably had gotten used to it, but Chen Ge frowned as a curious smell overwhelmed him.

It seems to seep out from the walls. Chen Ge looked around the room, the place was clean and neat. There was no rubbish in the waste bin, so he did not understand where the smell came from. *Another body sealed inside a wall?*

Chen Ge denied the thought quickly. The wall at the end of the third-floor corridor at Ping An Apartment had purposely been strengthened by Wang Qi. The wall of a normal apartment would not be thick enough to hide a body.

Doctor Gao noticed how weird Chen Ge was asking so he asked him, “What are you looking for?”

“Do you not smell a very weird odor?” Chen Ge stopped at the wall between 303 and 304; the smell was the most intense there.

“There is, but old buildings tend to have weird smell.” Doctor Gao led Men Nan to the bed, but the young man refused to go near it. He would rather stand than sit on the bed.

Chen Ge glanced at Men Nan, and he whispered to the doctor, “What’s going on with him?”

“He’s afraid of falling asleep. In the previous dream, the man was already strangling his neck. If he falls asleep again, he’s afraid it might be his eternal slumber.”

Chapter 116: OCD

Men Nan refused to sleep and stood stubbornly in the middle of the room. He maintained that weird posture of someone trying to push his head off from his neck.

“I keep feeling there’s something pressing on top of his head.” Afraid of rattling Men Nan, Chen Ge kept his voice lowered. “Not a psychological threat but something that exists in reality.”

Doctor Gao waved his hand surreptitiously as he stayed beside Men Nan. He pulled out his phone and messaged someone with it. Since Doctor Gao did not reply him, Chen Ge wandered off to inspect the other rooms in the small apartment.

The place was just over thirty square meters, but it had everything: a bedroom, living room, and a standalone bathroom.

It does look like a normal rental apartment.

Chen Ge looked around and found no hidden corner; there was no place to hide a body. He exited the living room and pushed the wooden door that led to the toilet. To his surprise, there was a half-body mirror hanging on the wall directly opposite from the door.

The door is right opposite the mirror?

Due to the first Nightmare Mission, Chen Ge was very sensitive to the presence of mirrors. He walked slowly to the mirror and looked at his reflection. *It’s rare for a room layout to have the mirror directly across from the door. Doesn’t it feel weird?*

The mirror was clean, like it was cleaned often. There was barely a stain. He moved his gaze away. There was a sink underneath the mirror. This was the scene for Men Nan’s nightmare.

Chen Ge mirrored the pose mentioned by Men Nan. He bent his body 95 degrees forward, and his head could barely reach the faucet. *From this angle, I can look at the situation inside the living room, so the scenario in his dream is entirely possible.*

If when his head was under the faucet and he could not see into the living room or his gaze was blocked by something, Chen Ge would not have been so afraid; it would have proved that it was all just a dream.

However, he tested it out personally and realized that the things described in his dream could very well have happened in real life. With his head under the faucet, the world appeared upside down.

Men Nan said that in his dream, the man would get closer to him every time. This is weird, why wouldn't the person just harm him directly? He purposely chose this slow torment, is there some kind of history between them?

Chen Ge was thinking about this when he felt something chilly touch the back of his neck. He stood up immediately to touch the spot.

A water drop? Where did it come up? Chen Ge raised his head to look at the ceiling. It was not leaking; the water came from nowhere.

Could it be the mirror? An image of himself inside the mirror coming out to strangle him while he was washing his hair appeared in his mind.

The black phone says that this Trial Mission is called A Room of Three; the mission name itself is a big hint. Chen Ge looked at himself inside the mirror, and something cropped up in his mind. *There are three 'people' inside this room; one is Men Nan, the man in his dream is another, but who is the third 'person'? Could this person be hiding inside the mirror?*

Placing both his hands on the sink, Chen Ge looked around and discovered two empty bottles of hair shampoo inside the bathroom waste bin.

Men Nan hasn't been living here for long, and he already finished two bottles of shampoo? If he is only washing his hair in his sleep, why would the shampoo in real life be exhausted? The child has a habit of sleep-walking? Does he wash his head in the middle of the night? Chen Ge thought about it and discounted the idea. Doctor Gao had said that he once invited Men Nan to his own home and the young man's nightmares did not stop.

Temporarily ignoring the possibility of sleep-walking, if Men Nan consciously washed his hair until he depleted two bottles of shampoo, that is even weirder. Why did he waste so much shampoo washing his hair?

The cleanest normal person might wash their hair twice a day, but Men Nan had finished two bottles of shampoo in a short amount of time. Chen Ge then realized that a third bottle that sat on the sink was half-finished already.

Under what condition would someone wash their hair with such diligence? Dandruff? Skin disease? Or there is something they need to wash away? Chen Ge leaned against the wall to think. *There are two times Men Nan got into an argument at school. Once was because of the animal prints on the curtain, and another was due to the number of sesame seeds on the biscuit, so it sounds like he suffers from serious OCD.*

For someone with OCD, if they noticed something not right, they would try their best to fix it. If the mistake could not be fixed, they would be very uncomfortable. Chen Ge suspected the reason behind the obsessive hair washing was related to this.

Only Men Nan can answer this question. He probably has hidden something important from Doctor Gao.

Suddenly Chen Ge's phone vibrated. He took it out and was surprised to find a message from Doctor Gao.

"Men Nan's family situation is more complicated than I thought. When I told Men Nan's family about his situation, they accepted it a bit too easily. They said they will send enough money to Men Nan for his medical fees, but none of them plan on coming to Jiujiang to visit him. I did not tell you this in case Men Nan heard me, so I sent it to you on the phone."

"Their son is sick, and the parents didn't even want to come to see him?"

"I also didn't expect that. When I interviewed Men Nan's friends, they all told me they thought Men Nan came from a happy family. I've gone through his social media, and he has shared many posts about loving his family." Men Nan put up a front that felt like he lived in a warm, charming family and was an educated, happy, professional, and studious young man, but it was ultimately just a front.

After reading the message, Chen Ge revealed his discovery to Doctor Gao. Soon after that, he got a reply from Doctor Gao.

"There are four main types of OCD: Checking, Ruminations, Contamination, and Symmetry and Ordering. Based on my observation, Men Nan's symptoms don't fit any of these; his obsessive hair washing merely satisfies this need he has.

"Based on my observation, Men Nan appears to suffer from a different psychological illness called PTSD. For example, victims of an earthquake remain in a highly alert state even after the quake is long over. They have a hard time walking out from the trauma because the mind keeps sending them the wrong information, telling them quake will return at any moment.

"Men Nan's symptoms are similar to PTSD. He is in a constant state of alert, and his eyes keep darting about, a sign for lack of security. It is like he is watching out for potential danger. In that case, the hair washing is probably a kind self-protective mechanism."

Chapter 117: Reason Behind the Hair Washing

Chen Ge could not understand Doctor Gao's message. "How could washing one's hair be related to a self-defense mechanism?"

"PTSD presupposes an earlier trauma. Men Nan repeatedly washing his hair is probably to escape from a psychological trauma; this perhaps has to do with his past."

"His past?"

“Yes, something he has experienced in the past has left a great trauma in him. Whenever he is reminded of it, his body reacts. To ease the pain, he instinctively seeks out a method to make himself feel better. Based on my observation, that method is to wash his hair.”

After a while, Doctor Gao sent another message. “At the beginning of the semester, I once asked Men Nan why he chose to study psychology. He told me that he wished to cure someone’s illness, and I now realize that he was probably talking about himself.”

“Looks like the problem resides in what happened to Men Nan when he was young. In that case, we have to ask him for more details. Only by knowing his history can we help him.”

“If my diagnosis is correct, it is all the more reason that we cannot ask him. He has been trying to forget this past, so if we ask him about it, it might send him over the deep end.”

“Then perhaps we can contact his family. The man is in such pain, but his parents do not care one bit about him? That doesn’t seem right.” Chen Ge wanted to snap a picture of Men Nan in his current state and send it to Men Nan’s parents.

“I asked them about this when I made the call earlier. Men Nan has had this habit of obsessively washing his hair since he was young. His parents have gotten used to it and don’t think it’s anything to worry about.”

“Did they say why this happened?”

“No, when Men Nan was small, his parents did take him to visit a psychiatrist. The diagnosis then was OCD, something that was very rare for a child his age. Since he was still so young, there was no medication that could be prescribed. The psychiatrist merely advised his parents give him constant company.”

“Obviously, his parents did not take the doctor’s advice,” Chen Ge replied without second thought. If Men Nan’s parents cared about him, they would not have acted so coldly.

“A slight OCD is not a disturbance to daily life, so his parents did not take it to heart. Other than that, after some digging around, I found out that Men Nan’s biological mother died when he was five or six. His father remarried, and he gave Men Nan a younger brother from the second marriage.”

“Biological mother is dead? There’s such a history?” Chen Ge saw a ray of light in their investigation.

“His biological parents did not share a good relationship. His father was not home a lot, so his mother practically raised him alone. One day, a burglar entered the house. What happened next, Men Nan’s current parents are not sure; all they knew was the neighbor called the police the next day.”

“The next day?” Chen Ge’s heart skipped a beat. “Then, where was Men Nan during the time of the crime?”

“I’m not sure, but based on the testimony from the neighbor, when the police arrived, Men Nan was already at the crime scene; he was the first person to find his mother.”

Reading the message from Doctor Gao, a chill ran up Chen Ge’s spine. “Meaning Men Nan spent the night with his dead mother inside the house? He was only discovered the next morning?”

“I suppose one can see it that way. Perhaps the burglar took pity on Men Nan or was not awake during the time of crime. In any case, Men Nan survived the break-in; however, the sight of his dead mother must have left a deep psychological scar in his heart. I suspect his OCD and PTSD are both related to this murder, but what I don’t understand is why he insists on washing his hair? How is that related to the murder?”

Doctor Gao’s reply was filled with confusion. It was the same question Chen Ge wanted to ask as well. He stood before the mirror and looked at his reflection. *Washing hair? Self-defense mechanism?*

The image of himself mimicking Men Nan appeared in his mind. Chen Ge touched the back of his neck, and he was suddenly reminded of something. *The water drop!*

He immediately messaged Doctor Gao. “At the crime scene, where was the body of Men Nan’s mother discovered?”

“After the burglar killed her, he removed the damp-proof boards from the ceiling of the bathroom and shoved her up there. If not for the fact that the neighbor’s kid went to school together with Men Nan, and thus both families shared a good relationship, the crime would not have been discovered so soon.”

“The space above the bathroom?” Chen Ge raised his head to look at the bathroom he was in. The ceiling of the place was low; he felt pressured standing in it. “I think I understand why Men Nan has the hair washing OCD.”

He used his phone to reply to Doctor Gao. “Is it possible that this was the real event that happened? After the burglar broke into the house, both mother and son discovered him. His mother asked for Men Nan to hide while she went to call the police but was unfortunately discovered by the burglar.”

“That’s possible, but what does that have to do with hair washing?”

“Men Nan witnessed his mother’s murder and hid away. After the burglar left, he went to search for his mother. When he entered the bathroom, his mother’s blood happened to drip on his head.” When Chen Ge typed those words, he was not feeling so good. “Therefore, even now, whenever a liquid falls on his head or whenever he is reminded of that incident, he washes his hair again and again; he wants to wash the memory away. Doctor Gao, you were right; this is more than a simple OCD!”

After sending those words, Chen Ge looked out the bathroom. Doctor Gao’s expression was written in shock. He caught Chen Ge’s eyes, and they shared a look.

“The cause of the illness has been found!” Doctor Gao put away his phone and walked toward Chen Ge. “I’ll bring him away now and provide the necessary post-traumatic treatment.”

“I’m afraid it’s not that simple.” Chen Ge glanced at Men Nan, who stood where he was, and slightly shook his head. “Men Nan kept repeating the same action in his dream, but washing his head wasn’t scary. The real scary thing was the man who kept approaching him. To help Men Nan, we have to find out everything about this man and chase him out of Men Nan’s dream.”

“Chase the thing out of his dream?” Doctor Gao looked at Chen Ge with a suspicious look before turning to look at Men Nan, who stood in a funny posture. In that short moment, he felt he was back at the mental hospital. “Are you kidding with me?”

“I already have a theory in mind; it’ll be confirmed later tonight!” Chen Ge lined all the clues together, and he was sixty percent confident. “There are indeed three ‘people’ in this room. Two of them have been confirmed. We only need to solve the mystery of the third one.”

Chapter 118: He’s Crazy

“What are you talking about?” Doctor Gao was made even more confused by what Chen Ge said. He could not follow the man’s train of thought anymore. Of course, this was not Doctor Gao’s fault; only Chen Ge himself knew about the hint provided by the black phone. The most crucial hint was the name of the mission—A Room of Three.

Chen Ge would not reveal the black phone to anyone, so he did not explain himself to Doctor Gao but walked out of the room alone.

Men Nan kept experiencing the same dream, and the thing that he remembered most clearly was washing his hair. The dream itself could not be counted as a nightmare; even Men Nan had said at the park that when he experienced this dream for the first time, he did not feel fear. It was after the man had gotten close to him that he started to feel fear. So, in that case, the real threat to Men Nan was the man.

Men Nan’s description of the dream confirmed this. When he was washing his hair, he did not feel any threat, but when the man neared him, he felt hostility. In the last dream, the man had wandered to his side and strangled his neck; obviously, the man meant him harm.

Therefore, in the room of three, there was Men Nan—the victim—and of the remaining two; one wanted to protect him, and the other wanted to harm him. In traditional Chinese beliefs, washing one’s hair in a dream meant removing bad luck, so Men Nan’s dream could very well be warning him that danger was encroaching!

After uncovering Men Nan’s past, Chen Ge suspected that the person who wanted to protect Men Nan was his mother. They had only had each other when Men Nan was growing up, so his mother had no reason to harm him. On the other hand, the person who wanted to harm him should have been the ex-tenant in Room 303.

When Chen Ge arrived at Hai Ming Apartments for the first time, he had immediately noticed the red strings on the railings; they were knotted in a special way. It was a traditional method of warding off evil spirits. From that moment onward, Chen Ge had suspected there was a malicious presence in this apartment.

That combined with what the uncle from Room 301 had told him before entering Men Nan’s room as well the mission hint from the black phone confirmed his suspicion.

To know the identity of the man from Men Nan’s dream as well as to solve Men Nan’s problem, I have to enter Room 303. Furthermore, this is related to the black phone’s mission.

Harming people in their dream, the thing in Room 303 was definitely not a kind spirit; it was probably similar to the mirror monster Chen Ge had come across earlier.

Have to face those monsters again.

People were separated into good and evil; it was similar for the departed. Chen Ge would not hesitate to destroy these evil spirits.

The uncle from Room 301 said that someone died in Room 303 before, and it has stayed vacant since. This means that what remains in the room is probably the dead tenant's malicious specter. Chen Ge had seen several types of ghosts already. The weakest of them was the lingering spirits; they were not that powerful, just a lingering consciousness. Stronger than lingering spirits were the spirits like Xiaoxiao, and stronger than that was the mirror monster. Chen Ge believed that the thing inside the apartment should be as powerful as the mirror monster.

I wasn't afraid then, so why should I be afraid now? Furthermore, there are so many living people around me who can help at a moment's notice. Chen Ge walked toward Men Nan to ask about the location of the landlord. Then, he left Room 304. He returned to the first floor to knock on Room 101.

After a while, a fat woman in her fifties opened the door. She studied Chen Ge up and down before asking, "You want to rent a room?"

"Yes, my friend is living in Room 304, so I want to rent the room next to him: Room 303."

"303 is not for rent, find another room."

"The room is empty; why isn't it for rent?" Chen Ge asked.

"There are empty rooms on the fourth floor. If you refuse to take those, then leave." The woman then closed the door, effectively ending the conversation.

Is she naturally that unsociable, or have I touched upon a sensitive subject? Either way, Room 303 sure has its secrets. The landlady naturally would not share the history of the dead person inside Room 303, so Chen Ge swapped his target and returned to the third floor to knock on Room 301.

The television volume lowered, and the man that stank of alcohol came to answer the door. "You again?"

"Boss, can I have a little bit of your time?" Chen Ge handed him a 100 note from his pocket. The man accepted the money, and his eyes that fell on Chen Ge seemed friendly. "What do you want?"

"I want to know about the things that happened in Room 303. The more detailed, the better."

"Room 303, you say?" The middle-aged man did not exit the door but waved at Chen Ge to ask him to enter his room. The small apartment was filled with trash, and Chen Ge could barely find a place to stand.

After closing the door, the man turned the television volume up before saying, "You sure are an inquisitive fella, but listen to me, for the sake of yourself and your friend, move out of this place as soon as you can. Not everyone can stay here."

"What do you mean? There's criteria to the tenants?"

“Interestingly enough, it’s related to Room 303.” The man grabbed a random bottle off the table and took a slurp of beer. “Do you know what the name of the original tenant that stayed in that room was?”

“How would I know something like that?” Chen Ge tried his best to ignore the alcoholic breath that drifted out of the man’s mouth. It was difficult to tell whether the man was serious or merely making up a story.

“The man’s name was Wang Haiming; this is his apartment building.”

“But I saw the landlady earlier. She appeared to be a woman in her fifties.”

“That’s his ex-wife.” The man glared at Chen Ge, telling him to not interrupt him. “Wang Haiming was fortunate enough to land on a pot of gold. After that, he abandoned his wife to marry a woman from a mysterious background. A few years later, that woman left Wang Haiming with all his money and even registered him at a mental hospital. In the end, it was his ex-wife who pitied Wang Haiming and got him out of the hospital. She then arranged a room for him to stay in; that room was Room 303.”

“Wang Haiming was once in a mental hospital?” Chen Ge was reminded of the black phone’s mission hint—He came from the Third Sick Hall.

“Yes, regardless of whether or not the man was crazy before he entered the place, after he came out from it, he was definitely abnormal.”

“Abnormal? What do you mean?”

“I’ll give you a simple example.” The man pointed at his head. “Wang Haiming had the tendency to knock his head against the wall whenever midnight arrived. It was as if there was something that had drilled itself inside his brain, and he wanted to crack it open. He would scream and wail as well as have arguments with himself. Sometimes, he would not stop even when his head was already bleeding. No one was able to stop him. Occasionally, they even had to call the cops to apprehend the guy.”

Chapter 119: He Has Returned

“Use his head to hit the wall? Like something had drilled into his brain?”

Chen Ge thought about what the man had said and realized that Wang Haiming’s condition was rather similar to Zhang Peng’s. They were both possessed by something, but Zhang Peng had chosen to cooperate while Wang Haiming had decided to struggle.

Midnight was the time of the day when the Yin energy was most concentrated and thus the time when those things were at their most active. It explained why Wang Haiming acted up every day near midnight.

Chen Ge decided to continue this line of questioning. “Boss, other than the nightly madness, did Wang Haiming perform any other weird actions?”

“When he first came out of the mental hospital, he felt normal, a little reticent if anything. However, after prolonged interaction, we discovered how weird he really was. He seemed fine in the day and sometimes would even greet others, but he changed into a different man as night fell. Banging his head

against the wall, talking to mirror and the walls, strangling his own neck until his face was purple, but he still would not let go.”

Through the man’s description, Chen Ge discovered a thing or two about Wang Haiming’s past. Wang Haiming’s second wife cheated him out of all his money and sent him to a mental hospital. If this was a set up, then Wang Haiming had probably been totally normal before he entered the hospital. A normal person entered the hospital and came out not normal.

He probably brought the thing back from the hospital. An answer slowly settled in Chen Ge’s heart, and he asked another question, “Do you mind giving me the details of Wang Haiming’s death?”

The man raised the bottle in his arm to take a big gulp. “I don’t know why you’re so interested in a dead man, but listen to me, get out while you still can; the place is cursed.”

“Thank you, but I know what I’m doing.”

After more persuasion from Chen Ge, the man finally loosened his lips. “Before this, whenever Wang Haiming acted up, we could hear his screaming, and the tenants would go over to help or call the place. However, on the day of his death, none of us heard him. The next morning, when the landlady went to drop him food, his body had already gone cold.”

“What did the scene of his death look like?” Chen Ge asked. This was crucial if he wanted to reconstruct what happened to Wang Haiming.

The man gave Chen Ge a curious look. He could not understand why this young man was so interested in these things. “At the time, I was also there. There was a large hole on Wang Haiming’s forehead, and blood was splattered all over the wall between 303 and 304. His face was purple like he had died from asphyxiation. There were finger prints around his neck, but according to the police, they came from Wang Haiming himself.”

“So, he strangled himself to death?”

“The room was locked, and he was alone. The door and windows weren’t tampered with, so that seemed like the logical conclusion.” The man finished the beer and tossed the empty bottle away. “You done? Since the sun is still up, I want to go down to buy some beer.”

“Since the sun is still up?” Chen Ge glanced at the darkening sky and finished the conversation. “One last question, after Wang Haiming’s death, have there been any weird happenings around here?”

Chen Ge noticed the man’s face shift when he asked that question. The man glanced at the money in his palm and whispered to Chen Ge, “Many old tenants swear that they have seen Wang Haiming return.”

“But isn’t he dead?”

Before Chen Ge had finished, the man pushed him out of the room.

“Hey! Explain yourself!”

The man had already turned down the corridor. After some hesitation, Chen Ge walked toward the first floor, the landlady’s room. Since Wang Haiming had probably come from the Third Sick Hall, this meant

that he had probably carried some information on the Third Sick Hall on him. Chen Ge would not give up on that trail. After all, the Third Sick Hall was the clue left behind by his parents.

After the landlady knew of Chen Ge's intention, her reaction was surprisingly intense. She warned Chen Ge that if he did not get off her premises soon, she would call the cops.

The steel door slammed in his face, and Chen Ge was feeling rather helpless, standing in the corridor. The landlady refused to cooperate no matter what Chen Ge said.

If I use my mallet to break down the lock of Room 303, that landlady will probably call the police.

Chen Ge returned to the third floor to discuss this with Doctor Gao, but he stopped when he reached the door.

Why is the person in Room 302 still on the phone? A young man's voice drifted out from behind the door, and the most repeated sentence was—"Are you trying to push me to my death?"

It has been more than half an hour since I left Men Nan's room, and the young man still hasn't finished his phone call? It was normal for a phone call to extend for longer periods of time, but it was weird for him to repeat the same few sentences with similar meanings again and again.

Who is he arguing with? His voice is the only one I hear, and now that I listen closer, it doesn't sound like he's talking on the phone at all. Chen Ge leaned against the door to listen in. He was reminded of what the middle-aged man had said—When Wang Haiming acted up, he would argue with himself.

This person is suspicious. He knocked on the door, and the sound of arguing stopped immediately. Ten seconds later, the door opened a sliver, and a young man's voice came out from behind the door. "How can I help you?"

"Regarding this Room 303 next to you..."

"Don't know."

Before Chen Ge finished, the door already closed. He had asked everyone he could, and Chen Ge was running out of options. He returned to Room 304 and nodded at Doctor Gao before walking over to the door to lean against it.

The mission venue given by the black phone is Room 303. I'll need to enter it and check it out before midnight. Chen Ge rubbed his eyes before walking to the window and pushing it open. Room 304 and 303 were adjacent to each other, and their windows were about one meter apart.

I should be able to get over it. Chen Ge pulled over a chair and placed it beside the window to give it a try. The window to Room 303 was not locked, so he could pull it open from the outside.

Getting over there is no problem, but what about the thing that might be waiting inside it? Climbing over the windows to get back might take too much time. Chen Ge lowered his head. The height of three floors was not quite short or tall. However, different from Ping An Apartments, the courtyard of Hai Ming Apartments was not a grass field but hardened concrete.

Chapter 120: Rusted Key

Should be fine if I'm careful.

Chen Ge opened his backpack and placed Xiaoxiao in his shirt pocket before picking out the flashlight and the mallet.

"What are you doing?" Doctor Gao heard the commotion, so he came out of the bedroom. He saw Chen Ge's weird get-up, and he felt a headache coming.

"You're just in time." Chen Ge dragged Doctor Gao to the window. "We'll keep in contact. You stay in Room 304, and I'll go take a look in Room 303."

"Why are you going into Room 303?" Doctor Gao's gaze swept the mallet in Chen Ge's arm before falling on the doll in his chest. His eyes twitched.

"The source of Men Nan's problem should reside in Room 303. I plan to go take a look before midnight arrives."

"You plan to go in this get-up? With a doll?"

"If I'm doing this alone, I might hesitate, but with you as back-up, I have confidence." Chen Ge called Doctor Gao's number and placed the phone in his shirt pocket. "Keep in touch."

Doctor Gao nodded reflexively. He held the phone in his hands, and the pressure on his shoulders tightened because now he had to look after the safety of two 'patients'.

"Be careful!"

Chen Ge climbed out the window. He placed the mallet in his pant pocket and leaned into the wall. With one leg hanging on Room 304's window, he used his other leg to kick the window to Room 303 open.

"Doctor Gao, don't end the call. Get help if anything bad happens." Then, Chen Ge leaned out the window and reached his leg toward Room 303's windowsill. His center of gravity was still leaning toward Room 304. When his leg found purchase, his hands that gripped Room 303's window loosened, and he slowly leaned toward the other window.

When most of his body leaning toward Room 303's window, he angled his body right at the opening, released his left hand, and used his right hand to grab the windowsill. With a pull on his right hand, Chen Ge moved his body toward Room 303.

"Climbing into the neighbor's room to solve the patient's illness?" Doctor Gao wanted to stop Chen Ge, but the man had already disappeared into Room 304's window. He had been in this field of work for more than a decade already, and this was the first time he had faced something like this during a diagnosis.

Chen Ge slowly angled his body downward and slid through the open window. *I'm finally in.*

Room 303 had been left vacant since the incident, so the interior design had been left the same. The room was covered in dust, and there were dirty patches all over the walls. The room was dark, and the

floor was uneven. After turning on the flashlight, Chen Ge noticed that there was an old and sullied carpet covering the floor of the room.

None of the other apartments, including the landlady's room, are carpeted, but this room is? This anomaly attracted Chen Ge's suspicion. A horrible stench was wafting out from underneath the carpet. Chen Ge gripped the edge of the carpet and tore it back.

There was not anything scary underneath it; there were merely some old clothes. All the clothes were for gents, and their sizes were about the same, so they probably belonged to the same person.

The smell of moldy clothing shouldn't be that pungent. Chen Ge used the mallet to move the clothes away and soon he discovered something creepy. Several dead sparrows were hidden underneath the clothes.

The bodies are intact, so they couldn't have died more than a week ago. When Chen Ge mastered the Dollmaker's Talent, some rudimentary knowledge about dead bodies had also entered his mind. *This room hasn't been rented after the incident, but someone has come in within this past week to hide these things under the clothes.*

The problem had become more troublesome, and this shifted his speculation in a different direction.

Wang Haiming died in this room. Unfortunately, I have no clue about the actual location, but that shouldn't matter too much. I shall search the whole room; I'll eventually come up with something. Chen Ge did not find anything else in the living room, so he jumped over the pile of old clothes and entered the bedroom.

A metal wire bed was leaning against the wall. There were several ancient bookshelves near to the bed, and some books were left on them. The pages were all moldy from the moisture, and they were also releasing a weird smell.

Chen Ge examined all the drawers and cupboard. He found nothing and finally walked into the bathroom. The layout of all the rooms in the apartment building were similar. As he opened the bathroom door, the mirror was staring back at him.

With only the light from the flashlight, the Chen Ge in the mirror looked rather different from real life. He did not enter the bathroom but merely leaned in to look from the threshold.

There do not seem to be any more clues in this room. The room was small, and Chen Ge had glanced over all the corner already.

Standing in the middle of the living room, Chen Ge looked at the pile of clothes hidden under the carpet. *This is weird. All these clothes have blood stains on them. These few small sparrows would not be enough to soak through so many clothes.*

With the aid of Yin Yang Vision, Chen Ge's sight was better than most, and he soon discovered something weird.

There's something wrong with the clothes.

With the mallet in hand, he slowly examined each item of clothing. Finally, he found a very normal gray jacket that was lying at the bottom of the pile. There was dried blood on the shoulder and the back of

the clothes. Wang Haiming had probably worn this jacket when he cracked his head on the wall. Only via blunt force trauma to the head would the blood splatter have appeared like this.

What is this? Chen Ge shook the jacket and found something jiggling in the pocket. He reached into it and felt cold steel on his touch. He pulled it out and saw it was a rusted key.

I've seen the keys to these apartments. They are flat copper keys, and this key is much larger than those. Chen Ge could not understand why a patient from a mental hospital would possess a key that did not unlock the door to his room.

Did he pick it up somewhere outside? But if he did, it doesn't explain why he kept it with him. Chen Ge temporarily did not understand the use of this key, so he held onto it for now. When he turned to leave, his flashlight hit the open window. The glass of the window reflected the shadow of an individual. The tenant in Room 302 was leaning his head out of his window to sneak a peek at what was happening over in Room 303.

Why would he care that I've entered Room 303? Chen Ge pretended not to notice and focused on replacing the pile of clothes. However, his mind was spinning. *Only the tenants in Room 302 and Room 304 can enter this room without using the front door. Men Nan in Room 304 is the victim, so the sparrows were probably left here by the young man in Room 302.*

But why? Has he been possessed by the creature in Room 303 as well?

Chen Ge was reminded of the weird actions of the young man. Talking to himself and arguing with the wall, it was so very similar to Wang Haiming's symptoms.