

Horrors 531

Chapter 531: Get All the Red Spectres

After hearing to Doctor Pei, Chen Ge went into silent contemplation. Jiang Long's whole family was something else; anyone would think they were crazy, but after some close studying, Chen Ge realized that perhaps none of them were crazy.

They just had different perspective due to their difference stance. Thanks to Fan Chong's game, Chen Ge had plenty of inside information.

Of the family of four, the brother, Jiang Xiaohu, was probably the most innocent. He was just a boy whose worldview had not matured, and everything that he had done was on someone else's order. The person urging him to do those things could be Zhang Chuyu or Jiang Bai.

The sister, Jiang Bai, was probably not suffering from paranoia at first. The giant doll that she had found in her father's house in Eastern Jiujiang was probably Xiao Bu's mother. She was not lying, but her mother, Zhang Chuyu, had said that she had trouble with her mind.

As a mother, Zhang Chuyu's action was really unreasonable. She had personally sent two of her children to the mental hospital and insisted that they suffered from mental illnesses. Chen Ge thought about it and felt like the reason Zhang Chuyu did that was because she wanted to hide something. After Jiang Bai told Zhang Chuyu about the doll, she had laughed happily. This was not the reaction of a normal person. Perhaps she had been doubting her husband, but after hearing that, she had understood that her husband did not betray her and was merely plotting something.

"Why would someone trap an adult inside a doll?" This should be the source of all the tragedy. Jiang Long died, and Zhang Chuyu and Jiang Bai went missing. Of all the victims and culprits, only Jiang Xiaohu was alive. Chen Ge sat on the chair and looked at the clean bedspread.

Ming Yang Residence's curse started eight years ago, but Bu Yi disappeared three years ago—that is a contradiction.

If she's the door-pusher, then the door that she pushed appeared three years ago, but the weird things in Eastern Jiujiang happened way before that. In other words, other than this door that has gone out of control, there are other things hiding in Eastern Jiujiang.

When Chen Ge was small, his parents had told him many times to stay away from Eastern Jiujiang.

The door in Li Wan City had already gone under Doctor Gao's control, but for some reason, it went out of control. Could this be the doing of those things in Eastern Jiujiang?

Chen Ge was familiar with Doctor Gao. To make a psychologist who was powerful enough to own several Red Specters take a step back, the threat in Eastern Jiujiang had to be very powerful!

He sure left a big problem for me.

The door in Eastern Jiujiang had already gone berserk. If he let it be, no one would know what will happen.

Before Doctor Gao committed suicide, he gave me a look at a picture. It was taken in Li Wan City, and it captured my parents standing with a girl in a red dress. That girl was most likely Xiao Bu. In the picture, my parents didn't go after the girl; they weren't in a hostile relationship.

Chen Ge's mind started to turn. He was not one with preconceptions.

Be it Men Nan or the well ghost in Coffin Village, all the door-pushers saw the door as their property. It should be the same for Bu Yi as well. Now that door in Li Wan City has gone out of control and the ghost behind the door have run all over the place, Bu Yi probably does not want to see that.

The world behind the door was formed from the door-pusher's memory. It reflected the door-pusher's most authentic heart and was a nightmare that would not dissipate.

No one would want their inner world splayed open like that for the whole world to see, so the door-pusher probably doesn't want the door to go out of control.

Chen Ge felt like the reason for the rampage in Eastern Jiujiang was due to the interference from other ghosts. After confirming that, Chen Ge had a thought.

Perhaps I can work together with Xiao Bu to vanquish the ghosts in Eastern Jiujiang and close the door in Li Wan City!

A normal person would not think of cooperating with a Red Specter. Even if they did, they would not know how to do that. However, Chen Ge was different. He had plenty of experience interacting with Red Specters from various age groups. He had confidence that he could convince Xiao Bu.

There have to be more secrets to the death of Xiao Bu and her mother. After the truth comes out, I'll seek justice for her.

The more that he thought about it, the higher the confidence Chen Ge had in the plan.

The hardest part of this plan is not to convince Xiao Bu but to find her.

Narrowing his eyes, he looked so scary that the doctor and workers did not dare speak openly.

Other people might not know where Xiao Bu is, but I have an advantage. If I continue to clear that weird game with Fan Chong, I'll definitely get a clue to Xiao Bu's location.

The character that he and Fan Chong controlled was not simple data but a young soul who had experienced the bottomless despair again and again.

Men Nan also said that to fully close a door, the simplest way is to find the door-pusher.

Chen Ge had a draft in mind. He was to work together with Xiao Bu and all the Red Specters to clean up Eastern Jiujiang.

There's a Red Specter at White Dragon Tunnel, a Red Specter at the bus stop for Route 104, and a Red Specter in Coffin Village. Perhaps they can lend me their strength.

Chen Ge had already interacted with the Red Specter at the tunnel. He had even almost carried the woman home. His touching words had managed to break down her defense.

The Red Specter in Coffin Village had a good relationship with Fan Yu. Chen Ge could prepare a time to bring Fan Yu into the mountain to go search for her. With Zhang Ya awakened as well as Xu Yin and Bai Qiulin, there was no telling who might survive Coffin Village.

“The female ghosts at the village and tunnel can be persuaded, but the key is the woman in the red raincoat. I’m not familiar with her, but I’ve promised to find her child within a week. Three days have already passed, but I still have no idea what her child looks like.” Chen Ge really did want to help her, but he did not know where to start.

Chen Ge mulled over the choices and eventually chose to try his luck at the bus stop at night.

Temporarily, that’s the only thing that I can do.

With the plan in mind, Chen Ge turned his gaze back to Jiang Xiaohu.

Weirdly enough, when other people looked at him, Jiang Xiaohu had no reaction, but when Chen Ge’s eyes fell on the boy, his expression changed. His body leaned backward until the ropes that tied his limbs became taut.

How come it feels like the child is afraid of me?

Chen Ge walked forward and sat down on the bed. “I know you can understand me, and I know you’re harboring many secrets in your heart. Why don’t you talk to me? Perhaps I can help you.”

Chapter 532: If You Don’t Tell me, I’ll Come Back Everyday

Jiang Xiaohu obviously did not want to get too close to Chen Ge, but his limbs were tied down, so he could only watch as Chen Ge sat down beside him.

“You look so nervous—is it because there are too many people in the room?” Chen Ge looked at Jiang Xiaohu with concern. “Relax, we’re all here to help you.”

Then he turned to look at Doctor Pei. “Do you mind if I have some alone time with him? The child doesn’t seem like he’s used to being surrounded by so many people.”

Doctor Pei had difficulty written on his face. Honestly, he did not think that Jiang Xiaohu’s anomaly was because of the crowd. “I don’t think that’s wise. Jiang Xiaohu has the record of harming others, and if we leave you here alone, I’m afraid...”

“It’ll be fine. There’s no need for you to worry about me.” Chen Ge put down his backpack. The bag looked so heavy, but no one could tell its content. “The child just lacks a chance to communicate. There’s a kind-hearted side that is hiding within him.”

The nurse and workers turned to Doctor Pei. When the police came to investigate Jiang Xiaohu, even they did not have a request like this. Doctor Pei wanted to deny the request, but considering Lee Zheng’s introduction and the number of lives that were involved in the case, after thinking about it again, Doctor Pei nodded. “We’ll be just outside the door. If the boy suddenly acts up and comes after you, you only need to call, and we’ll rush in to save you.”

“Alright, thank you.”

The workers at the asylum filed out of the Room 1 by one. Seeing their departure, Jiang Xiaohu became more nervous. He made a weird throaty noise like an injured animal sensing danger. The door closed. When the doctor and workers left, Chen Ge took the recorder out from his bag and activated it. The sound of static filled up the room; it felt like the sound could crawl into one’s mind to play with one’s nervous system. “Don’t you feel better with a little relaxing music?”

Chen Ge looked at Jiang Xiaohu, watching his every move. Ten seconds later, he suddenly said, “You should have seen a ghost before, right?”

Jiang Xiaohu’s pupils shook as he tried to get away from Chen Ge.

“Based on your reaction, I suppose I’m correct. Let me think. Did you see her dead body in person but she came back to life several days later and appeared somewhere else?”

The sanity of Jiang Xiaohu aside, based on Chen Ge’s question alone, if Doctor Pei was present, he would have thought that Chen Ge was crazy as well. The ropes were pulled tight, and Jiang Xiaohu was agitated.

“Whether you’re real crazy or fake crazy, I hope you understand one thing—you are the only one who survived not because you’re lucky but because she allowed you to live.”

When Chen Ge was playing the game, he had a question in his heart. How did Xiao Bu know about the dungeon at her friend’s home?

Initially, Chen Ge had thought that there was a message left behind by her mother, but what her mother did was not exactly something to be proud of, and she should not tell that to her young daughter. There was a detail in the game worth noting—Xiao Bu found the key inside her mother’s pajamas, but upon closer inspection, why would someone who was trapped have the key to the exit inside her pajamas?

After meeting Jiang Xiaohu, Chen Ge had a speculation. Could it be this boy who stole the key and handed it over to Xiao Bu’s mother?

Xiao Bu could get into the dungeon probably because Jiang Xiaohu told her about it. After all, they were classmates.

“I will not side with either party. I just want to know what happened back then.” The static sound grew. The lights in the room flickered, and the room darkened. A red shadow materialized next to Chen Ge. Jiang Xiaohu was really scared. He could not control himself anymore and started to scream.

“You can sense his presence? Are you reminded of something?” Chen Ge had summoned Xu Yin not to scare Jiang Xiaohu but to have Xu Yin inspect Jiang Xiaohu’s body to see whether he was possessed or not. Jiang Xiaohu’s face was frozen in fear. He mumbled incoherently as he pointed at Chen Ge.

“Has he lost his ability of speech after a long period of zero communication, or has Xu Yin scared the boy?” Chen Ge turned off the recorder. Xu Yin had not found any signs of ghosts on the boy; he was just a normal child.

The static disappeared. Chen Ge grabbed Jiang Xiaohu's hands that were tied by ropes. "I'm helping you and helping her in the process. I know that there's a shadow in your heart. Tell me, treat me as someone that you will never see again. I can guarantee what you tell me will never be revealed to a third person."

Several minutes later, Jiang Xiaohu slowly calmed down. His head was covered with cold sweat as his chest rose and fell, clambering for air. Chen Ge had just summoned a Red Specter; an adult would have been scared witless, much less a child.

Placing the recorder on the bed, Chen Ge said seriously, "If you don't tell me, I'll probably come back every day until you tell me the truth."

Jiang Xiaohu finally relented and opened his mouth to speak. "What do you want to know?"

"Let's start with your father. Why would he capture a living person? And why did accidents keep happening at Ming Yang Residence, which he was overseeing?"

"I don't know what happened, but I remember that Jiang Long once said that the project at Ming Yang Residence was a faux. Someone forced him to do it. The four buildings weren't for human tenants but for ghosts."

He stuttered endlessly, and Chen Ge took a long time before he understood what Jiang Xiaohu said, "Who would force him to do something like that?"

"At the very beginning, Jiang Long said that someone was watching over him. He went to many doctors, and they all said that it was his work pressure, but his symptoms worsened. Eventually, he started to ramble nonsensical stuff. He said that he saw his shadow come alive. He believed that his shadow had its own consciousness and could communicate with him."

"How did your father's conditions get under control?"

"I'm not sure. Starting from one morning, Jiang Long suddenly became energized, but it was from that day onward that he became someone else and gained many weird habits..." Jiang Xiaohu paused and hesitated. "I stopped calling him father from that day because I had a feeling there was another person living inside him. I suspect he was taken over by his shadow."

"Taken over by his shadow?" Chen Ge was reminded of the shadow at the fresh water plant. The monster had been laying seeds all over; it was an enemy that was more difficult to deal with than he had expected.

"Regarding the capturing of living person, that was his idea; it has nothing to do with my family. A few years before Jiang Long's accident, he appeared to be doing that constantly. He would lead people to Li Wan City to torture them both physically and mentally to drop them into despair. I don't know why he would do that. Perhaps it was his personal hobby."

Jiang Xiaohu's childhood experience had matured him. After he was done, he sneaked a glance at Chen Ge before going silent again.

Chapter 533: Li Wan City West Street

“Purposely lead people to Li Wan City to be tortured?” Chen Ge felt that had to do with the ‘door’. They needed someone to open the door in Li Wan City, but that would lead to a question. Why would the ghosts in Eastern Jiujiang be so insistent on this door in Li Wan City? How was it different from the other door?

Jiang Long had captured Xiao Bu’s mother and trapped her inside the doll. Chen Ge had no idea what had gone on in detail, but he could make an educated guess. However, even until her disappearance, the door was not pushed open. Instead, it was Xiao Bu who opened the ‘door’ after witnessing what happened in the dungeon; this was probably something that had escaped the ghosts’ expectation.

“Do you have any other questions?” Jiang Xiaohu interrupted Chen Ge’s thoughts. “If there’s nothing else, can you take this away?”

He pointed at the recorder with fear in his eyes.

“Since you knew that your father had committed a crime, why didn’t you call the police?” Chen Ge put the recorder back in his bag. He smoothed down the bedsheet like he had not taken the thing out.

“My sister did plan to call the police. Mom tried to stop her, but it was to no avail. When I woke up the next morning, my sister had already disappeared. Mom said that sister’s condition had suddenly worsened and she needed to be sent for treatment.” Jiang Xiaohu gripped the bedsheet by both hands. “Mom also told me that if I didn’t act obediently, I’d be sent for treatment as well.”

“You were threatened by your mother? Looks like she might be involved in the whole incident somehow.”

“Jiang Long is dead, and both my mother and sister are missing, so what’s the point in asking these questions now?” Jiang Xiaohu raised his head to look at Chen Ge. He seemed to have realized something, and his tone softened. “When the police came earlier, I said the same thing. I’ve told you everything I know.”

“You’ve told me everything you know?” Chen Ge looked into Jiang Xiaohu’s eyes. A normal lingering spirit would not be able to hold Chen Ge’s gaze, much less a child. Just as Jiang Xiaohu turned his head away out of guilt, Chen Ge asked the last question, “I saw a painting on the ceiling in Room 104 at Ming Yang Residence. In the painting, your family of four was biting a little girl’s four limbs. Perhaps you and your sister were dragged into this, but in that painting, you’re all killers, or at least that’s the perception of the painter.”

“Painting?” Jiang Xiaohu was startled. “I don’t know anything about that.”

“You said that Ming Yang Residence was made for ghosts, so the painting was probably done by ghosts as well.” Chen Ge had a feeling that Jiang Xiaohu was still hiding something from him. He was about to continue the interrogation when the boy’s eyes suddenly rolled backward, and his limbs started to spasm. His lips whispered pleas of help like he was about to die from asphyxiation.

Hearing that, Doctor Pei and the workers rushed in immediately. He held onto Jiang Xiaohu’s limbs and gave him a sedative shot. The spirit went out of the boy’s eyes, and he slowly stopped struggling before losing consciousness.

“Mr. Chen, did the boy hurt you?”

"It's fine. I've already asked all that I need to. Thank you for your help." Chen Ge stood up to thank Doctor Pei.

"I'm glad to be of help. If you need any help in the future, don't hesitate to ask." Doctor Pei was just being polite, but Chen Ge treated it seriously. He beckoned Doctor Pei, and the two left the room together.

"Mr. Chen, do you have something else to ask me?"

"It's not suitable to ask this in there. I wish to ask you a few questions privately."

"Are you afraid that Jiang Xiaohu might overhear us?" Doctor Pei thought Chen Ge was being a bit too cautious. "Based on our diagnosis, the boy does suffer from mental illness..."

"Sometimes, mental patients are cleverer than normal person. I know several examples." Chen Ge walked further away before he sighed in relief. "Doctor Pei, you said earlier that Jiang Xiaohu's sister went to Jiang Long's place in Li Wan City and found a hidden room?"

"Yes, Jiang Bai told me that in person."

"Then, have you been to Li Wan City to confirm her statement?" Chen Ge was more curious about that. If Doctor Pei had told the police that, then the police would definitely have gone for a follow up, but in his conversation with Lee Zheng, the man did not bring up anything about a hidden room.

"I've not been there myself, but the police have."

"Did they find anything?" Chen Ge's heart raced because the 'door' should be in that room. If nothing went wrong, the police should have found something.

Doctor Pei shook his head. "I heard them say it was just a normal home. There was indeed a hidden room behind the closet, but there was no iron cage or large doll. There were instead several safes with business documents and cash."

"Cash?"

Doctor Pei saw the change in Chen Ge's expression, and he explained patiently, "The police took some pictures. Apparently, that's Jiang Long's inheritance, and he was planning to leave them to Jiang Xiaohu."

"Do you mind telling me the house's exact location? I just want to go there in person to check it out." The map of the game was very similar to Li Wan City three years ago, but it was only a similarity; it was a reconstruction of Li Wan City based on Xiao Bu's nightmare. Therefore, it was Li Wan City in Xiao Bu's eyes, so there were differences compared to real life.

"His father stayed in the first residential area on Li Wan City's West Street. First floor, Room 1. The building looks rather old. When the police went to the place, they were surprised that Jiang Long would buy an apartment in a place like that."

When Chen Ge heard that, it hit him immediately. That was the same place where Fan Chong and Fan Dade lived. It looked like there was a reason that Fan Chong would happen upon that game. *Looks like I have to go back to Fan Chong's home again and return the e-bike.*

Realizing that Chen Ge was preparing to go to Li Wan City, Doctor Pei reminded him, “Mr. Chen, I suggest you go in the morning. It’s not safe to go there at night. I have many patients from Eastern Jiujiang here. From talking to them, I’ve realized that they all saw something or heard something at night, and that caused problems to their mental state.”

“There’s something like that?” Chen Ge realized how serious the condition in Eastern Jiujiang was. The monsters were lawless and had seeped into every corner of the place.

“Just take an example from the patient that came to me yesterday. One month ago, he went to the airport to fetch his wife. It was a midnight flight. The couple drove back to Eastern Jiujiang.

“Based on his explanation, when they passed a junction, the buildings on the side suddenly became strange and unfamiliar, and the streetlights dimmed.

“They continued driving, and then, in the rear-view mirror, the driver saw an approaching bus. It was already midnight, so why was there a bus on the road? He not only saw the bus but also all the passengers waving at him, and he heard unknown voices calling his name.”

Chapter 534: The Promise

“He was spooked, so he quickly turned the car around. But the road seemed unending like there was no way for him to go back. Just as he was about to give up, his phone suddenly rang. His grandmother was worried about him, calling him to ask for his location. He told her what had happened, and the strange thing was that while he was talking with his grandmother, the car for some reason drove out of Eastern Jiujiang.

“After he hung up the phone, he realized with a shock that his grandmother had passed away at home last year. He had been caught up at work, unable to return to see her on her last journey.”

“His deceased grandmother saved him?” When Chen Ge heard the story of the bus and the changing buildings, he believed that this patient was not crazy; he was telling the truth.

“Instead of saying that his grandmother saved him, it should be the good memory that he had of her in the subconscious of his mind saved him. From the perspective of psychology, he has been harboring guilt because he did not return to visit his grandmother at her death bed, and this guilt enabled him to retain his rationality when his mental state was flagging.” Doctor Pei stuck his hands into the coat. “I used this example because he was lucky, but there are many more patients here that were not as lucky. I’m telling you this because there are many weird happenings in Eastern Jiujiang, so be careful when you do your investigation. I know it’s strange for me as a doctor to tell you this, but I still hope that you’ll be careful.”

“Doctor Pei, do you have more patients like that driver here?” The more he listened, the more Chen Ge felt like he had come to the correct place. “Can you tell me more about them?”

“There are so many stories, but they will affect your worldview. Plus, this is the patient’s privacy. Even if you’re with the police, I’m not allowed to reveal their information to you without a warrant.” Doctor Pei rejected Chen Ge’s request.

“That’s fine. I still need to thank you for your help.” Chen Ge thought that Doctor Pei was a good man, at least compared to the other psychologist that he knew. After leaving the asylum, Chen Ge called a cab to return to New Century Park. He looked at the time; it was only 9 pm.

This is roughly the time for the last bus on Route 104 to arrive. Maybe I should go and try my luck tonight?

When Chen Ge returned the previous night, he had recharged the electricity in Fan Chong’s e-bike. He had been afraid that there might not be enough fuel when Fan Chong came to fetch his vehicle. However, Fan Chong did not show up in the morning, probably because he had something else to do.

I can follow Route 104 tonight to wait for the bus. Whether I run into the woman in the red raincoat or the bus, it’ll be fine. If it’s already too late when I arrive in Eastern Jiujiang, I can just stay the night at Fan Chong’s place.

Chen Ge plotted out the schedule in his mind.

It’s getting closer to the date that I’ve promised the woman in red raincoat. That is the most important mission; if I have time after that, I’ll send Men Nan back to the Third Sick Hall.

After inspecting his backpack, Chen Ge rode the e-bike to the gate of New Century Park. He greeted the guard. The guard was used to Chen Ge going out at night, and he never asked him any questions. It was worth noting that Chen Ge shared a good relationship with the guard.

When Chen Ge’s parents disappeared, Chen Ge had moved into the Haunted House. After the visitors and workers left, only the guard and Chen Ge would remain at the theme park. Sometimes, the guard would come to get help from Chen Ge. When he was in a particularly good mood or bad mood, he would secure two bottles of alcohol and have Chen Ge follow him into the cafeteria at night to ‘borrow’ the kitchen to cook supper.

When Chen Ge had been at the lowest point of his life, many people at theme park had reached out to help him, so when theme park faced its trouble, he would help it back without hesitation.

“Xiao Chen, you’re at least a boss now. Riding an e-bike is not that suitable with your current identity.” The aged guard held a cup in his hand. Even over the distance, Chen Ge could smell the alcohol.

“We’ll talk about that later. I haven’t even gotten my driver’s license. I swear the people at the driving school are prejudiced against me. They keep saying my driving style is too wild.”

“Then, why don’t you change? They’re only concerned about you—safety first.”

“It’s too late to change now. In the future, I’ll just hire a driver to ferry me around.” Chen Ge rode the e-bike out of New Century Park. After his exchange with the guard, he noticed a problem.

If I really do get the bus, I’m afraid I’ll only be able to ride it around the countryside; going to the city is still not that convenient. But I hear the number four subway is haunted, so perhaps I can go check it out in the future.

Riding the bike, Chen Ge rushed to the nearest stop for Route 104. He stood in the cold wind and waited for half an hour. There was no sign of the bus or the woman in the raincoat. “Does it need to be raining?”

Chen Ge did not give up; he followed the route and rode to Eastern Jiujiang. Chen Ge reached Eastern Jiujiang at 11 pm. He could feel the change in the air. There were suddenly no cars on the road.

“When I came last time, there was still the occasional taxi on the road. Is it because of me that even taxis don’t come here at night anymore?” Chen Ge shook his head. He felt like he was not that powerful; something else scary had probably happened in Jiujiang.

“Perhaps it’s not destined for me to meet them tonight. This is not my fault.” Chen Ge would stop at every bus stop. Initially, he had hoped that the bus would show up, but he slowly gave up hope as he neared Li Wan City. The condition of the road worsened. At 11:30 pm, Chen Ge felt a cold caress on the back of his neck. He reached out to touch it, and rain drop as soft as silk fell on his hand.

“It’s raining?” Chen Ge took out his phone and looked for the weather forecast. It said that it should not rain in Jiujiang for the few days.

“But rain is a good sign. The gathering of Yin energy means a higher chance of running into ghosts. The woman in the red raincoat might show up.”

Putting his phone away, Chen Ge looked around. Even though he had been to Eastern Jiujiang several times, he was still unfamiliar with the cityscape. The streetlights showered dim, yellow light. The light was barely powerful enough to banish the darkness.

“I’m still currently on the bus route for Route 104. Should I wait for it at the bus stop?”

The changes to his surroundings were similar to the description provided by Doctor Pei. Chen Ge had a feeling that the bus hearse might show up that night.

“Xiao Gu said that the woman’s child is on the bus. I only need to help her save her child and show it to her.”

Chen Ge had his own plan. He was only going to show the child to the woman in the red raincoat. He did not plan to return the child to her. He had only promised to help her find her child—whether he would return the child or how was he going to return the child, that was a completely different issue.

Chapter 535: The Hearse

The night sky was like a thick cloth, smothering all the light. Chen Ge sat on the e-bike and held his arms open. The rain fell into his open palms as he murmured, “Looks like the rain is picking up.”

The buildings on the side looked rather blurry. It was not that late yet, but there was already no light in the neighborhood. “Do people in Eastern Jiujiang like to sleep early?”

Chen Ge had already noticed the anomalies. He parked the bike by the bus stop and took out his phone to look at the time.

“Not yet midnight. Normally, those things become active after midnight.” Chen Ge had not brought a raincoat or umbrella, so he was worried of getting the comic wet. “Should I stay here and wait or continue moving before the rain picks up?”

After some thought, Chen Ge decided to keep moving. "If the rain gets too heavy, I'll find a place to hide from it. I cannot waste the whole night waiting for the bus to appear. The main mission for the night is to go to Jiang Long's apartment where Xiao Bu's mother was supposed to be trapped."

Chen Ge was a quick thinker and would move after he came to a decision. His bike was the only vehicle on the road, but he did not panic.

"Route 104 is the longest route in Jiujiang, and it has the most stops. Other than that, it is also the only route that goes from Western Jiujiang to Eastern Jiujiang. Back then, the city council opened this route to better connect Western and Eastern Jiujiang.

"Thinking back, of all the routes, the ghosts only targeted Route 104. This means that the culprit wished to use the bus to transport the ghosts and spirits between Eastern and Western Jiujiang."

Chen Ge was unclear what the culprit was up to, but it felt like they were preparing to make Eastern Jiujiang into a paradise for ghosts. They had even built a home for these ghosts at the fringe of Li Wan City.

"Eastern Jiujiang is more dangerous than Western Jiujiang; I have to be careful." The deeper he travelled into Eastern Jiujiang, the dimmer the streetlights became. The twisted light failed to provide him warmth and safety, but it made him even more nervous. The buildings by the road were things that one could see normally, but there was something off about them like the tenants were not living humans but something else.

When he passed a T-junction, Chen Ge stopped. He stood next to a bus stop. He looked at the forks of the road. He tried to comb his memory, but he could not remember which turn to take. After completing so many missions given by the black phone, Chen Ge had cultivated the habit of memorizing the routes so that he could have a quick escape. After visiting Li Wan City so many times, he had memorized the routes, but when he tried to follow the direction in his memory, he realized that this path was something that was not in his memory.

"Did I remember incorrectly, or have I entered the territory that is influenced by the door?" He took out his phone and opened the GPS. It took a long time before telling Chen Ge it failed to capture his location. "Looks like I've run into the situation that Doctor Pei mentioned."

However, Chen Ge did not repeat the patient's mistake. He parked the e-bike by the road and picked up his backpack to walk to the nearest shop and slammed heavily on the curtain door.

"Such a rapid hammering at midnight, but no one came out to check the situation, huh?" Chen Ge turned back to look. The buildings in the distance were receding into the darkness. The darkness was like a beast, preparing to swallow everything including Chen Ge.

"The longer the door is left out of control, the greater the overlapping of the despair and strangeness of the world behind the door and the real world." Chen Ge had gotten this information from Men Nan. He had not witnessed this before, so he could not tell for sure.

"Never mind, it's not the time to think." Chen Ge opened the zipper of his bag. He was about to take out the hammer to test the reaction of the citizens behind the door when something suddenly moved

through the inky darkness. The broken appearance said plenty about the lack of maintenance. Instead of a bus, it looked more like a mobile coffin.

“Is this the bus?” Chen Ge looked at the bus that had appeared at the junction, and his eyes narrowed. At the same time, the black phone he kept in his shirt pocket vibrated. Like his usual habit, Chen Ge took it out to take a look.

“Congratulations, Specters’ Favored! You’ve triggered a two-star Trial Mission—The Hearse!

“Would you like to accept this mission?

“Warning! If you give up this mission, the scenario will never be unlocked!”

Seeing the message, Chen Ge accepted it without hesitation.

“The hearse carrying dead people is already on the road. If you fail to leave within one hour, you’ll be left on the bus forever!

“Mission Requirement: Take the bus on Route 104 to Li Wan City after midnight and disembark it safely.

“Mission Hint: After completing this mission, a new Trial Mission will be unlocked!”

After two seconds, Chen Ge put the black phone away. The mission information confirmed his speculation. “Of the few Trial Missions given by the black phone initially, the Hearse should be the key linking Western and Eastern Jiujiang! After completing this mission, the black phone should update me with more difficult missions from Eastern Jiujiang!”

Chen Ge carried his backpack and returned to the bus stop. He looked at the bus that was slowly coming in like a coffin, and his eyes narrowed. “There should be something above a Red Specter in Eastern Jiujiang. After completing this mission, the black phone will probably provide a four-star Trial Mission.”

Taking a deep breath, Chen Ge was ready. He stood in the dark alone, and his expression was serious. “In a way, this is a new beginning, so I must be cautious.”

The wind fluttered his sleeves, and the rain wet his hair. Chen Ge looked at the approaching bus, and his one hand reached into the backpack. The rain continued to fall. The eerie bus on Route 104 entered the bus stop, and Chen Ge’s heart started to race. He heard the machine voice report the bus’ arrival.

“It’s finally here.”

Chen Ge looked at the passengers inside the bus who had their heads lowered. He walked forward, but before he left the platform, the bus drove away. It picked up speed and sped into the darkness. Watching the bus scurry away, Chen Ge only came to after a long time.

“Is it not allowing me to get on the bus?”

The black phone’s mission requirement was for him to take the bus to Li Wan City and get off safely, but the bus did not plan to let Chen Ge get on at all. If he could not get on the bus, then the mission would naturally fail. This was something that Chen Ge had not anticipated.

To prevent the mission failure, Chen Ge hopped onto Fan Chong’s e-bike and started to race down the street to chase after the bus.

“Wait, you left a passenger behind!”

Chapter 536: Road Rage

The thick layers of cloud filled up the sky. There was no light shining through. The darkness fell, and there were shadows flashing within the buildings by the road. Many vicious eyes were spying on the road in the dark. In the empty city, a man rode an e-bike to chase after the bus.

“You’ll need to stop at the next station, so why not stop now?” Chen Ge hissed through gritted teeth. This was his first encounter with the hearse, and the enemy did something out of his expectations.

“Does the bus only allow entry to dead people and ban living people from entering? But that doesn’t seem right. How come no one stopped Huang Ling and Xiao Gu when they stepped onto the bus?”

The e-bike had limited fuel. At most, Chen Ge could chase for four stops before he needed to use human power to propel him forward. He was so caught up in the mission that he ignored the directions. All those precautions that he told himself to take were tossed to the wind as he chased after the bus like his life depended on it. “I’m going to need a reason when I catch up to you on why you refuse to let me on the bus!”

It was hard to use an e-bike to catch up to a bus. However, that was not impossible. Perhaps because the bus itself was too old, or maybe there was some other reason, but its speed was quite slow. Chen Ge chased after it relentlessly but could not close the gap between himself and the bus. He could only hope that the bus would stop at the next station.

The buildings on the side receded into the background. The rain soaked Chen Ge’s shirt. After a long time of chasing, he finally saw the next bus stop.

“Someone is waiting for the bus?” Chen Ge clearly saw that there was a middle-aged man standing at the next stop. He was wearing a winter coat, a scarf, a hat, and a mask to cover his entire face. The bus pulled up to the stop and started to decelerate. Before it parked fully, the door opened.

The driver seemed to wave at the man, telling him to get on the bus. The middle-aged man looked confused but got on the bus after hesitating for a moment. This little interaction enabled Chen Ge to drastically close the distance between himself and the bus.

“This is my chance! The purpose of this hearse seems to be to transport the special passengers waiting at the bus stops to a certain place, so if there’s ‘someone’ waiting at the platform, it will stop.” The middle-aged man was still confused after he got on the bus. The bus had continued moving toward the next stop.

The cold rain hit Chen Ge’s face. The buildings on the side turned unfamiliar and strange. The rain became heavier, but none of that was going to stop Chen Ge. Ever since obtaining the black phone, he had not failed a mission.

“If this was any other mission, I might have given up already, but this is related to the unlocking of the other missions in Eastern Jiujiang, so I have to succeed!” Chen Ge was placing his life on the line. Riding an e-bike to chase after a hearse at midnight, a normal person would never do something like that.

After crossing several junctions, Chen Ge saw the next stop. There was a strange figure standing there. His body movement was extremely uneven, giving off the feeling that he might topple over at any moment. The bus decelerated as it flew into the platform, and the doors opened.

The strange figure who was squatting on the ground noticed something and was hesitant. The atmosphere inside the bus was strange, so he did not hop on immediately. A passenger opened the bus window to wave at him, but the strange figure could not understand it. This short hesitation made Chen Ge's day. He stepped on the pedal and rushed forward. After a short interaction, the strange man eventually got on the bus.

The driver seemed to have noticed the approaching Chen Ge. He skipped the broadcast inside the bus, closed the doors, and sped away.

"Soon! If there's a passenger at the next stop, I should be able to catch up to it!"

Chen Ge pretended not to notice the fuel and gave it his all. Several minutes later, the third bus stop appeared in the distance.

A couple was standing at the platform, their bodies glued tightly together. The bus pulled up to the stop, and the doors opened. The driver shouted through the door. The man prepared to get on the bus, but the woman stopped him. She tried her best to make him stay and even started crying.

There was conflict between the two. Earlier, they had been sweet as honey, but in the blink of an eye, they started to argue. The man said something like, it was already the seventh day, so they had to leave. He gripped the handle on the door, but the woman refused to let him go and even started to bite the man.

"This is my chance!" Chen Ge saw this from afar and became excited. There was not much fuel in the e-bike. If he missed this chance, it would all be over. The couple was still arguing. The driver inside the bus felt like he was about to go insane. He glared at the couple and started to yell at them.

Seeing that Chen Ge was not far away, he decided not to wait anymore and directly closed the doors. However, this time, the man was determined to get on the bus, and he used his body to stop the door from closing. The woman yanked him out, but the man held onto the handle inside the door and refused to let go.

The driver grew agitated. He almost stood up to give the man a kick. The couple continued to tussle, the driver screamed, and the other passengers' expressions all changed. They could feel something.

The man blocked the door, but the driver could not wait anymore. He started the engine, but at that moment, everyone inside the bus heard the sound of electric whirring. It did not come from inside the bus.

"Finally, I caught up to you!" A growl came from outside the bus. Chen Ge rode past the bus and parked the e-bike before the bus. His palms were wet with sweat. The fuel was running out, and he had almost failed the mission.

Standing by the door, Chen Ge did not waste his energy arguing with the driver. He reached into his bag to take out the hammer.

The arguing couple saw the scary weapon and immediately turned docile.

“Don’t worry, it’s because of two of you that I could catch the bus, so I will treat you well.” Chen Ge raised the hammer and looked at the driver, who was sweating. “Are you going to open the door on your own, or do you want me to open it for you?”

The driver’s Adam apple moved and unwillingly opened the bus’ front door.

“You’re driving a public bus, and everyone has the right to take public transport, so why are you discriminating against me?”

Under the watchful gazes of all the passengers, Chen Ge picked up the e-bike and told the man, “Brother, do you mind lending me a hand?”

The man was rather confused, but he still followed Chen Ge’s order and hauled the e-bike into the bus.

“You two, hop on as well.” Chen Ge told the couple.

The man wanted to reject, but Chen Ge grabbed his sleeve. “Don’t worry. With me here, the driver will not dare bully you.”

Chapter 537: Name? Occupation? Hobby and Interest?

The man’s body was glued to his girlfriend, and Chen Ge pulled on his sleeve. He stood before the front door of the bus and uttered with some regret, “How about you give me some time to think about it?”

“You’ve helped me a lot tonight, and I’ll need to thank you personally.” Before the man could say anything, Chen Ge pulled him and his girlfriend onto the bus. The door closed, and the bus continued to move. Hearing the robotic and cold announcement, the man and his girlfriend felt equally chilly.

After dropping in the fare, the couple shuffled to the back of the bus under the driver’s venomous gaze. However, Chen Ge held the e-bike and stood next to the driver. He turned his head to look at the man but did not say anything.

Cold sweat slid down the driver’s face. He was wearing an old uniform. His hands gripped the steering wheel so tightly that the back of his palms were pulsing with green veins.

“Are you okay? You don’t look so good.”

“I’m fine, it’s just an old illness.” The driver avoided Chen Ge’s gaze and kept his eyes on the road. “Er... please move to the back of the bus. Our company has a rule that prohibits the driver from talking with passengers when the bus is moving.”

“The company has a rule to prevent you from conversing with the passengers? Then does your company have rules that stop you from accepting passengers at night?” He had almost failed the mission. Chen Ge had chased the bus for three stations before he finally got on, so he was still irked at that.

The driver thought about it and forced out an excuse. “I saw you on the e-bike, and I thought you were rushing to the bus stop to hide from the rain, so I didn’t stop.”

“That does sound reasonable.” Chen Ge silently shoved the hammer back into his bag. He looked at the driver and nodded meaningfully. “What’s your name?”

“Tang Jun.” The driver had a feeling that he had been targeted, and his legs kept shaking.

“Not bad.” The driver treated his passengers well, and his mind was active. He had a great sense of self-preservation. Was this not the type of ghost that Chen Ge was looking for?

Chen Ge did not trouble the driver anymore and moved to look at the other passengers on the bus.

Other than the couple who sat at the back and Chen Ge himself, there were eight other passengers on the bus. One was the man who was smothered in thick clothing. He was wearing a hat and a mask, so only his eyes were revealed. Sitting next to the man was the person who had gotten on at the previous stop. His limbs were uncoordinated like a toy that had seen better days.

Other than those passengers whom Chen Ge had seen get on the bus, there were four women in patients’ garbs. They sat next to the window and had their heads lowered. The long, black hair covered their faces, and they looked quite scary.

Chen Ge scanned them with his gaze, and his eyes eventually fell on a middle-aged woman who sat on the third row. The woman looked so ugly and so fat. She was holding the hand of a young boy who sat next to her. The boy looked around four or five. He was leaning against the woman. No matter how much the bus shuddered, he did not open his eyes.

He doesn’t look like he’s asleep but feels more like he’s unconscious.

This was Chen Ge’s first time on the bus. The situation inside the bus was different from what Xiao Gu had described. He did not see any high schooler or men who were drenched. The only one that matched was the middle-aged woman.

Is the boy next to her the red raincoat woman’s child?

Chen Ge was not sure because the description provided by Xiao Gu regarding the child was different from this boy.

Could the woman have kidnapped another child from Eastern Jiujiang?

That thought flashed across Chen Ge’s mind. He parked the e-bike nicely and walked to the back of the bus. The couple hid far away from him, but they did not expect Chen Ge to come to them. The couple nudged deeper into the seat awkwardly, and their bodies did not once separate from each other.

“This is a public space, why don’t you act more normally?” Chen Ge sat down next to the man like he could not see the other empty seats on the bus. “Brother, thanks for your help earlier.”

The man did not know what Chen Ge was up to, so he smiled at Chen Ge politely.

Once he got a closer look, Chen Ge realized that there were burn marks underneath the man’s neck, and the scary scars were a huge contrast to his smooth skin and handsome face. Xiao Gu seemed to have run into this couple before, but back then, they did not get on the bus.

“What’s with the two of you?” Chen Ge asked. “You were so sweet at the station, but once the bus showed up, you started arguing.”

“I wanted to move to Eastern Jiujiang, but she didn’t want to, so we started arguing.” The man’s voice was hoarse like his windpipe had been scorched by flames.

“What is so good about Eastern Jiujiang? It’s far more comfortable to live in Western Jiujiang. Once you’ve tried living there, I swear you’ll fall in love with it.” Chen Ge stared at the other passengers and did not let his guard down too much. The Hears was a two-star scenario, so the difficulty was similar to Mu Yang High School. Even though there was no Red Specter, it was still quite dangerous for Chen Ge.

“Western Jiujiang?” That was not an option within the man’s plan, but he was too cultured to deny Chen Ge’s suggestion, so he said absent-mindedly, “I’ll definitely go take a look if there’s a chance.”

“You won’t regret it.” Chen Ge revealed a kind smile. “If you don’t mind me asking, what do the two of you do for a living?”

The man lowered his head slightly like he did not want to talk about it, but the woman next to him said, “He was my violin tutor. My dad hired him from overseas with a high payment.”

“You know how to play the violin?” Chen Ge’s eyes lit up immediately. This was a talent!

The man touched the woman to stop her from talking, but the woman seemed to have been reminded of something sad and gripped the man’s hand tightly, refusing to let go. Her nails had cut into the man’s flesh, but the wound did not bleed. “Compared to the violin, he’s better at lying and cheating.”

“What are you talking about?” The man’s voice turned severe. “I’ve never lied to you; I just wanted you to give me more time.”

The woman looked the man in the eye. She moved her gaze away after a while. “It doesn’t matter anymore. After all, now we’re finally together, and no one will be able to separate us again.”

Chen Ge listened patiently. He preferred a storied life. A conflict-filled experience would give birth to a different relationship, and a strong relationship would be able to touch other people.

Taking out his phone, Chen Ge searched for the news in Jiujiang. The keywords were ‘couple’ and ‘fire’, and he soon found what he was looking for.

After the last investor for Ming Yang Residence killed himself, his only daughter committed suicide with her violin tutor at Li Wan Mall. The police originally suspected that it was the company worker who committed this crime. This had been big news at the time when it happened.

Chapter 538: The Living Humans on the Bus

Reading the message on the phone, the way Chen Ge looked at the couple next to him changed. Ming Yang Residence was built for ghosts, and all three investors died; there had to be a bigger secret behind it. Chen Ge even suspected that the three investors were possessed by the scary shadow. That was the only explanation for them focusing on an abandoned site at the fringe of Li Wan City.

The deaths of the three investors probably have something to do with the shadow. The shadow will stop at nothing to reach its goal, and he killed off all the people once they outlived their use; this shadow sure is cruel.

After discovering the couple's identity, Chen Ge saw them in a new light.

The man insisted on getting on the bus and prepared to head to Li Wan City probably because he had overheard some news, but the woman refused to get on the bus. She probably had her own reasons as well. They had different thoughts, but their bodies were joined together when they committed suicide, so the conflict caused them to stay at the bus stop. If not for Chen Ge, they probably would not have gotten on the bus.

This couple will help me understand Li Wan City and Ming Yang Residence better. Looks like I'll need to treat them more than just simple employees.

For the time being, Chen Ge was more interested in the other passengers.

Tonight, I'm destined to get away with plenty of reward.

Chen Ge liked to challenge this type of low difficulty mission. They could just sit around the table and solve the problem, how nice. The couple argued among themselves, and Chen Ge carried his bag to leave the last row. He sat down next to the man with uneven coordination.

"Brother, how are you doing?" Chen Ge hugged his backpack and looked at the man.

The head turned awkwardly, and the man paused for a long time before realizing that Chen Ge was talking to him. He raised his hand to gesture for a while. Seeing the confusion on Chen Ge's face, he pointed at his mouth and then waved his hands.

"A mute?" Chen Ge did not expect such a passenger, so he bowed slightly. "I'm sorry."

The man waved his hands again. The tip of his finger touched the back of Chen Ge's arm—it was warm.

The hand is harm? This is a living person?

Narrowing his eyes, Chen Ge used his Yin Yang Vision. He failed to capture anything off about this man. *He should be someone who got on the bus accidentally like Xiao Gu and Huang Ling.*

However, after thinking about it, Chen Ge realized that his assessment was not so accurate. The bus arrived at the station at 11:30 pm—who would wait for a bus at a time like that?

Chen Ge stared at the man for a long time and slowly noticed the problem. The man's IQ seemed to be stunted. His throat could make noises, but he did not know how to speak. A mentally-challenged person taking a hearse to go to Li Wan City at night, was he really dumb or faking it?

Taking out his phone, Chen Ge opened his contact page. "It's very dangerous for you to be alone outside at night like this. Where are you heading? Why don't I go with you? This is my phone number."

The man did not quite get what he was saying; he only knew how to shake his hands. Chen Ge looked at the man's attire. His clothes looked unwashed, and his trousers were ragged. This image really did not fit a murderous culprit.

Unable to communicate, Chen Ge tried several times before giving up. He planned to finish the Hearse's mission and followed the man to Li Wan City to see what he was up to. If he was problematic, then Chen Ge would detain him immediately. If he was just a normal person, Chen Ge would follow him as well to prevent him from being ambushed by ghosts.

At night, Li Wan City would be hiding many things. Under the influence of the door, the town had become the place where the two worlds overlapped.

Standing up, Chen Ge walked down the aisle. The passengers looked at him, but none said anything. The driver did not breathe a word, only focusing on driving to the last stop. Stopping next to the man in many layers, Chen Ge studied the man. "Aren't you hot from wearing so much?"

The man raised his head to look at Chen Ge. Then he lowered the rim of his cap and said coldly, "I'm fine."

He was covered up by thick clothes. With the cap, gloves, and mask, only his eyes were revealed.

"Are you sick?" Chen Ge used Yin Yang Vision, and he realized that this man looked like a living person as well.

How come the humans act more strangely than ghosts?

Chen Ge sat down next to the man. He could sense coldness coming from the man, a coldness that radiated from his body. Chen Ge had seen this situation before. In Coffin Village, the body temperature of the old lady who had been the well ghost's friend for several decades had dropped over the years, and in the end, it was only with the ghost's help that she managed to maintain her body temperature.

Did this mean the man had constant interactions with ghosts?

Chen Ge could not get a good look of the man's face. He was unable to tell anything from just the eyes and voice.

When they got on the bus, the driver did not stop them. This means that the driver did not sense any threat from them. Even if they have a trump card, it's not stronger than Zhang Ya.

Realizing that, Chen Ge relaxed and leaned against the chair. He kept glancing to his side, and he noticed some useful information from certain clues.

The scarf around the man's neck was knitted from wool. The edge of the hem was messy. The end was coming loose. Normally, just like knitting a braid, the edges should have been brought back into the hem. Chen Ge had done something similar when he made the clothes for his mannequins at the Haunted House. They looked flawless.

But the scarf was obviously less than perfect. The person who had knitted the scarf was probably an amateur. From the design of the scarf, this was probably from at least ten years back. Furthermore, even on the bus, the man did not take the scarf off. This thing was very important to him—this normal-looking scarf was something special to him.

Lastly, the man's voice when he spoke. Chen Ge believed that the man to be around forty. He likely had a wife who loved him a lot, and his wife had probably died, perhaps in a car accident. The man's body was cold. Like Chen Ge, he had probably stayed with a ghost for a long time.

Combining all the clues, Chen Ge believed that the man had a ghost who accompanied him always, and that ghost was his wife.

Chen Ge was only speculating since he did not have actual proof, but compared to the man's identity, he was more curious about why the man was going to Li Wan City at night.

Most of the ghosts I've met in Western Jiujiang were trying to consume each other. The ghosts in Eastern Jiujiang seem to be different.

Chapter 539: People [2 in 1]

Being stared by Chen Ge for a long time, the man tightened the collar of his jacket and coughed lightly. "Do we know each other?"

His voice was clear and full of stories like he had witnessed many things in his life and had already seen through the vicissitudes of life.

Chen Ge did not expect the man to suddenly speak. He paused for a beat before answering the man's question. "You look very much similar to a friend of mine. The presence is almost the same. Have we met somewhere before?"

The man turned his head away. There was a trace of tiredness in his eyes. "You've probably got the wrong person."

"Impossible, I'm sure I've met you somewhere before. Are you sure we haven't met before?"

This was Chen Ge's first meeting with the man; he said these things only because he wanted to chat further with the man to obtain more valuable information. The man was silent for quite some time. He looked at Chen Ge, and after another bout of hesitation, he raised his hand to remove the mask from his face.

He had a tall nose. His skin was pale and lips purple. After the man took off the mask, he coughed heavily. "You've got the wrong person; I'm not the person you're looking for."

Then, he put the mask back on. There was a pool of indescribable emotions in his eyes when he added, "That is because I have no friends."

The man was not afraid of Chen Ge. He was a passenger who had gotten on the bus, and he was still breathing. He did not know what was hiding inside Chen Ge's shadow. Perhaps in his eyes, Chen Ge was no different from the other passengers. Chen Ge wanted to get to the bottom of the events in Eastern Jiujiang and also wanted to bring all the ghosts on the hearse back to his Haunted House. However, out of his expectations, there were two living passengers on the bus that night.

He did not want to expose his secret, so he did not do anything that was too out of line in front of the two living passengers. Therefore, he had a change of plan. He was going to keep a good profile. After they arrived at Li Wan City and the two surviving passengers got off the bus, then he was going to have a good chat with the other passengers. He sat in his seat obediently. Chen Ge moved his eyes away from the man and looked out the window.

The rain fell on the glass. The buildings on the sides were already blurred beyond recognition. They were surrounded by darkness. The bus that they were on was like a small island floating on a piece of dark sea.

The car suddenly became very quiet. The man realized that Chen Ge had stopped talking after he conversed with him, and he thought that he had misspoken and offended Chen Ge. He placed both of his hands on his knees and suddenly asked Chen Ge in a whisper, "Did you take this bus to find that friend of yours?"

Chen Ge's eyes started to focus. The expression on his face started to change like the man had guessed the secret hiding in his heart. There was some uncertainty, some pain, and some self-blame. Nodding slowly, Chen Ge turned to look at the man next to him. "How did you know that?"

"All the passengers on this bus have their own story and secret, or else we would not have purposely taken this bus after midnight."

"Listening to your tone, it sounds like this is not the first time you have taken this bus." Chen Ge's lips moved to reveal a smile that was similar to the one that he had when he got on the bus. However, there was a deep pain in his eyes, and those who saw it would feel sorry for him.

"I took this bus on Route 104 to go to work every day for almost twenty years." The man talked very slowly like he had not spoken to someone for a very long time and needed time to get used to using his voice. "At the time, the unit that I worked at was rather busy, and there were not enough people to go around. I always had to work late, so I would always take the last bus home. Initially, I quite liked taking the last bus. There would not be too many people, so it was very quiet. But after some time, looking at the darkened buildings by the roadside, the loneliness within my heart started to grow."

"Unit? What was your occupation in the past?"

"I was a doctor, a doctor at the burn unit." The man stressed the term 'burn unit'. A ripple crossed his eyes like he was reminded of something.

"Burn unit?" Chen Ge had only interacted with psychologists in the past, so he was not familiar with the burn unit.

"Surgery, skin transplantation, recovery, those are our job," the man said in a casual tone, but Chen Ge could hear the heaviness behind his words. The man also noticed the extreme pain in Chen Ge's eyes. He seemed to see his own shadow reflected in Chen Ge, and he subconsciously treated Chen Ge as a kindred spirit.

After that brief conversation, the two became quiet again. After some time, Chen Ge opened his lips to ask, "Since you're taking this bus, are you also looking for someone?"

The man nodded slightly, and his gloved hands fell on the scarf.

Finding the opening and asked in a nonchalant manner, "Was it your wife who knitted you this scarf?"

Hearing that, the man halted for a moment. He moved his hand away from the scarf before slowly shaking his head.

“It’s not from your wife?” The reality was not as Chen Ge expected. Now he was curious. “Do you mind telling me your story?”

The rain increased in intensity and fell on the window, creating a crescendo. The man was silent before removing his mask to take a deep breath. “The patients at a burn unit are different from other units. They lack skin, a face, and even the shape of a normal human being. When I was doing my residency, I really thought I’d entered hell. However, I slowly got used to the horror, the stench, and the decay.

“At the time, I really thought that I’d become desensitized to everything, and when I faced the patients, I would not get too emotional.

“That was true until I was thirty and ran into a patient who was fourteen. She was still a child, and her back had been severely scalded. I used half an hour before I could separate her clothes from her skin. The girl was very quiet, and she did not make any noise or even cry.

“To prevent possible complications to her growing brain, I did not apply full sedation. When I was operating on her back, the girl just opened her eyes and looked at me. Her back and her face were like two extremes. I consoled her just like how I consoled my other patients.

“After dealing with all the wounds, I went in search for the adult who brought her to the hospital. There were some follow-up details that I needed to tell them, but after some asking around, I realized that it was the neighbor who brought her to the hospital. The wounds on her body were not because of an accident; it was her parents who did that to her.

“I called the police.”

When the man spoke, he would cough occasionally. His physical condition was ailing.

“The girl’s father had serious violent tendencies. Her mother was a deaf and mute; she could barely take care of herself. The police detained her mother for a month. In the end, it was her mother who went to the police station to beg for mercy. After all, the whole family depended on her father for survival.

“During the period of her recovery, I accompanied her daily. The child was like a wild flower blooming by the roadside. Being by her side, I, someone who had gotten used to the ugliness of the world, felt a sense of happiness and joy.

“About two months after her discharge from the hospital, I received a phone call from an unknown number. It was her voice on the other end. Unable to withstand her father’s actions after he got drunk, she decided to run away from home. I took her in, hiding that fact from the police and her family.

“I know that it was wrong of me to do so, but I couldn’t imagine what would happen to her if I sent her back.”

At this point, the man paused. Seeing that the expression on Chen Ge’s face did not change, he continued. “When she was twenty, she confessed to me. At the time, I was thirty-six. We skipped the romance; we did not register at the necessary department. We held a small wedding, for just the two of us.

“The five years that followed was the happiest period of my life, but the pressure that came was immeasurable.

“When I was forty-one, her parents found her. Humiliation, beating, and scolding came. They created chaos at her school and at my hospital. Life suddenly changed. Rumors are a very scary thing. I was able to withstand it, but she gave up.

“When I took the last bus home that day, I called her several times, but no one answered. I reached home and opened the door; the dishes that she had cooked were laid out on the table. Beside them was a long letter that she had written for me. In the end, I found her inside the bathroom. Her body was soaked inside the water, and she was already gone.”

The man’s face was startlingly white, and the coughing became more severe. Chen Ge reached out to pat him on his back.

“Thank you.” The man did not put the mask back on. The tiredness in his eyes could not be hidden anymore. “Actually, all the passengers on this bus have their own stories. In the morning, everyone is busy, so the stories are well-hidden amid the hustle and bustle. At night, these helpless, pained, and despairing people take this bus to head to the last stop.”

From the way that the man told the story, he did not seem to realize that the other passengers were ghosts, or perhaps he already knew that but treated them as people.

“Do you know anything else?”

“I know too much. Like that mute next to us. I’ve met him before.” There was a pity in the man’s voice. “He is mentally challenged and doesn’t know how to speak. He was a worker at a supermarket. He often gets bullied by others but smiles back at them, thinking they’re saying good things about him.”

“Then why would he get on this bus? An innocent person wouldn’t get involved with these negative things.” Chen Ge was confused.

“He’s going to the last stop to find his daughter.” The man did not have the heart to continue anymore. “Due to a certain reason, someone reached out to a gang of ruffians to bully his daughter. They scorched her palms with cigarettes and pulled out her hair, and the camera even caught them doing worse thing to the girl. The girl did not tell her father because she did not want to worry him. However, in the end, the pressure was too much for the girl to bear, and she ended her life.”

“School bullying?” Chen Ge’s eyes darkened. These things really did happen; he had personally witnessed it before. “Did he call the police? How did the police handle this?”

The man next to them was mentally challenged, and his limbs were uncoordinated. He would even trip on himself when he was just out walking. Someone needed to help him fight for justice.

“Call the police?” The man smiled darkly. “The man who is mentally-challenged, the mute, the man who has trouble even walking, knocked out the bunch of the ruffians and the culprit and dragged them to an abandoned building in Eastern Jiujiang. Then, he doused the place with fuel and burned them all in a large fire.”

“He’s not physically capable, and he’s mentally challenged. How did he manage to do all that?”

“The police had the same question, so even today, the case is still open. The murderer has not been found.” The doctor and Chen Ge turned to look at the man at the same time. He sensed their eyes on him, and the man turned around to smile blankly at them.

“Using violence to stop violence, it will only lead to more problems. The heart that is already broken from pain will have trouble resisting the pressure that comes after taking revenge. He might go from one extreme to another.” Chen Ge could not judge the father’s actions. If he put himself in the father’s shoes, he could not guarantee what he might do.

“An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. I think it’s quite fair. Let’s not talk about him anymore. I’ve seen more serious cases on this bus compared to him” the doctor said. “There was one night when it was raining heavily. After I got on the bus, I saw a young man in a well-made suit get on. He looked so energetic and bright. He stood out easily from the rest of the passengers, but underneath that surface hid a very broken mind.”

“What is the story about him?”

“The young man was once a wedding host. He was very popular, and he had hosted several hundred weddings even though he had only worked in the field for a few years. Finally, it was his turn to get married. He dressed up nicely to welcome the bride, but they got into a car accident on their way back from the wedding.

“The bride died on the spot. Even though he survived, his face was ruined. The company politely requested him to quit. After that, he changed field to become a funeral designer. When his service was needed, he would help people design the funeral, and when he was free, he would look over the graveyard.

“That’s quite normal, but in our conversation, he accidentally revealed some information. When the night was quiet and there was no one around, he would help the dead bodies connect the dots and help them with Minghun, and of course, he would be the host.”

The story told by the man was rather scary. “He came on the bus to find his wife, and then he prepared to finish the wedding that he was owed.”

After hearing the story of the doctor from the burn unit, the mentally-challenged father, and the wedding host, Chen Ge realized the bus on Route 104 was different from what he had imagined. The bus seemed to have become a route for the living humans in Jiujiang to use to enter the darker side of the city. People from all walks of life used it to find their last hope.

Chen Ge did not know how to tell the doctor from the burn unit that while everyone treated this bus as their last hope, they were destined to fail. This was because the last stop of this bus was made from the deepest pain and despair.

Chen Ge even suspected that the culprit in Eastern Jiujiang made this bus to collect despair and various negative emotions.

The ghost stories society created so many ghost stories to collect despair and negative emotions; the thing behind the door needs stuff like this. Other than that, only those living with extreme pain and despair can become vessels for ghosts.

There were humans and ghosts on the last bus. They sped toward the last station with the last piece of hope, but the world that welcomed them would be one of endless despair.

I cannot allow this to continue anymore. Looks like I'll need to drive this bus away. Perhaps I can use this to open a new path that leads directly to the Haunted House.

The strange living passengers on the bus reminded Chen Ge of the game that he had played at Fan Chong's home. Inside the game, other than Red Specters and other ghosts, there were many crazed murderers. Chen Ge now suspected that these murderers had once been living passengers on this very bus heading down Route 104.

The whole town will be filled with baleful spirits and crazed murderers. The culprit in Eastern Jiujiang is much crazier than the ghost stories society.

Chapter 540: Have You Heard About the Ghost Stories Society?

After hearing the doctor's stories, Chen Ge understood that every passenger on the bus had their own sad past. They had secrets buried inside their heart, and the last stop that the bus was heading toward in the middle of the night was for that last piece of hope. This was a bunch of sad people—Chen Ge wondered if he should tell them the truth.

If he did not, they could still try to survive with that bit of hope, but if he did, these passengers might collapse from losing that last hope.

The final destination of the hearse is Li Wan City, the place that is influenced by the world behind the door. It is filled with evil and despair. All their effort is destined to be in vain. I cannot allow them to sink deeper into this abyss. These people deserve to be treated better.

Telling them the truth might cause them to collapse, but if he also provided them with new hope, then things would be different. After giving it some thought, Chen Ge decided to use his own method to help them.

The doctor noticed that Chen Ge had started to space out, so he asked, "What are you thinking about?"

Chen Ge did not answer. His brain was turning and the stories of Wang Qi, Xu Yin, and even Doctor Gao appeared in his mind. He could fool them easily by taking these people's experiences as his own.

"It's fine if you don't feel like sharing it. Perhaps we might see each other again on this bus." The man's eyes scanned Chen Ge, and his lips moved slowly. "This is your first time on this bus, right?"

"Yes." Chen Ge nodded.

The doctor nudged closer to Chen Ge and lowered his voice. "When you arrive at the place and someone asks you to choose between giving and accepting, remember to choose accepting."

"What do you mean?" Chen Ge noticed the problem easily. "I just want to find my friend, and I need to give or accept something? Brother, what is really at the last stop?"

The doctor turned his head and looked around before he spoke. "There is a ghost apartment in the small town. You can hear the voice of the person you're looking for inside the building. If you wish to meet them, then you have to give up something."

Chen Ge memorized what the doctor said in his heart. He had revealed some important information—there was a ghost apartment in Li Wan City. He answered back in whisper, "Brother, I just want to see my friend. Do I need to give up something for that?"

"There is no free meal in this world. If you want to meet your friend, then you have to either accept something or give up something." The doctor was a kind-hearted person. He removed the glove and pulled up the sleeve. There was a red thread around his wrist. "This is to ward against evil. Whenever I enter the ghost apartment, I choose to accept. Every time I leave, there is a certain heaviness on my shoulders like something is on my back, following me out."

Chen Ge knew what kind of acceptance the doctor was referring to. No wonder the doctor was radiating coldness and was so weak. The culprit used these despairing people to feed the ghosts, to use them as vessels.

This was similar to the members of the ghost stories society, but there was a small difference. These passengers had no idea that their bodies had become homes for ghosts and that their emotions had become food for ghosts. They had no power to control the ghost and could only accept everything passively.

"Then what happens when you choose to give? Why won't you let me pick that?"

"That's what the father next to us chose. Initially, you only needed to give up your nails or hair, but as time progresses, the things that you need to give up become worse, like teeth, fingers, your conscience, and the kindness in your heart." The doctor's voice was low. If Chen Ge did not have Ghost Ear, he would not have been able to hear it.

"Even the conscience can be given up?"

"They will have to go to the small town to do some things like stealing, mugging, or killing some things. After you choose giving, you'll realize that you'll slowly become someone that you cannot recognize." The doctor saw how curious Chen Ge was, and the lad did not look the least afraid, so he did not want to explain anymore. "You only needed to remember that those who chose to give, after they have given everything, will stay inside that building."

"Meaning, in the end, they will give up themselves?" Without heart, humanity, and memory, they had lost their identity. Chen Ge realized that these people whom the doctor mentioned were similar to the crazed murderers inside the game. They were cultivating darkness and highly aggressive.

If the game represents the world behind the door in Li Wan City, then those who chose to give probably end up being sent into the door.

Those who chose to accept became vessels for monsters and were slowly being consumed; those who chose to give eventually became monsters behind the door.

Chen Ge compared the methods of the culprit in Eastern Jiujiang and the ghost stories society. The society had people control the ghosts to investigate how to take control over the 'door', but the

situation in Eastern Jiujiang was completely different. The culprit had the ghosts control the people and then continued to feed the 'door' nutrients—this made the already open door more chaotic in nature.

If Doctor Gao was the epitome of both rationality and madness, then the culprit at Eastern Jiujiang was a complete monster. They no longer viewed human beings as human beings and tried their best to ruin everything that was good about humanity.

This sure is a scary enemy. Chen Ge understood many things from his conversation with the doctor, and he slowly calmed down. *The shadow at the fresh water plant managed to cross swords with the healing Zhang Ya. Could the shadow's body really be an existence above Red Specter?*

Chen Ge would run every time that he saw a Red Specter before this, but with Xu Yin and Bai Qiulin's growth, he had overcome his fear of Red Specters. However, something scarier than that had appeared soon after.

He had no idea how powerful the enemy was. Thinking about the fact that his parents had disappeared in Eastern Jiujiang, Chen Ge suddenly felt unsettled. He looked at the e-bike parked in the middle of the aisle, and he grumbled to himself, "Have I been a bit too high profile recently?"

The woman in the raincoat was a Red Specter, and she knew that her child was on the bus, but she still did not dare get on the bus—this went to show her terror due to the culprit. *I'll need to reassess the enemy's ability since they are able to scare a Red Specter.*

Chen Ge grumbled to himself. The doctor next to him thought he was spooked by the stories he scared so he consoled him. "You'll be fine if you choose to accept. Perhaps you'll be able to see her before the burden becomes too much."

The doctor's wish was really simple. Chen Ge did not want to see the kind man walk step by step into the darkness, and he decided to use his own method to save these people. "Actually, I know another way that you might be able to meet them, and you don't need to pay such a horrid price."

"What kind of way?" The doctor's brow rose. He was interested.

Turning around to look the doctor in the eye, Chen Ge said, "Have you heard about the ghost stories society?"