

Revival 126

Chapter 126: Repaying Debt

Back at the apartment.

After taking a shower and changing clothes, Yang Jian finally rid himself of the faint stench of death that seemed to linger on him.

Having spent several days in Huanggang Village, he felt as if the scent of death was growing stronger on him. This change wasn't just physical; mentally, he was no longer fearful of corpses, death, or blood.

It was as if he was born to adapt.

Beyond that, the psychological changes were the most terrifying.

It seemed like Yang Jian and the evil ghost inside him were slowly merging.

When he walked out of the bathroom,

Jiang Yan, sitting in front of the computer, looked at him with an expression as if her parents had just died and said, "I'm freaking out. I feel like I'm about to go bankrupt."

Yang Jian asked, "What happened?"

Jiang Yan said, "Remember you asked me to trade gold last time?"

"If you hadn't brought it up, I almost would've forgotten. I made a deal this time, earned some money, and was going to give it to you to manage," Yang Jian said. "Just like last time, trade gold."

“It’s best not to.”

Jiang Yan quickly interjected, “It’s no longer possible to trade gold now. Domestic and international gold trades are all under control. It’s allowed to buy but not to sell. The money we made last time, over three million, is all tied up in it, and now it’s completely stuck.”

“Where did you get so much money?” Yang Jian asked.

Jiang Yan said a bit sheepishly, “Loans, I borrowed a bit.”

“Hearing you say that puts my mind at ease,” Yang Jian said.

“What are you relieved about?”

“Your lesson learned, I’ve decided not to trade gold anymore. It seems that countries are already starting to regulate the financial markets, and the situation is getting more serious. It’s best to convert the money at hand into tangible assets, otherwise, I’m afraid of severe devaluation later, like ten thousand yuan for one bun,” Yang Jian pondered for a moment.

This crude way of making money through stock speculation was no longer viable.

If he could notice this, then those in the financial world must have caught wind of it much earlier.

With countries now intervening strongly, trading gold is probably like throwing money into the water.

Although he wasn’t knowledgeable about finance, he had heard some explanations from Jiang Yan recently.

“Ah, hearing you put it that way, I feel like I can’t survive, I’ll have to eat dirt. What about all the interest? I feel like I have to sell my house to pay off the debt,” she said.

Jiang Yan was on the brink of tears; she lay back on the bed, rolling back and forth hugging a pillow.

“Seeing you like this, I don’t know why, but I feel a bit happy,” Yang Jian could not help but take a little pleasure in her misfortune.

“Did you already get some insider information? Why did you withdraw all your funds that day?” Jiang Yan suddenly sat up and looked at him suspiciously.

Yang Jian said, “It’s difficult to explain this situation to you. Sometimes when people are unlucky, they can even fall to their deaths while walking. Just accept it, you’re not destined to get rich in this life.”

“No, no, that’s the money I earned from working hard, and now I’m in a pile of debt. How am I going to live in the future?” Jiang Yan grabbed her head, at a loss.

Suddenly, she thought of something and set her sights on Yang Jian, “By the way, how much money did you make this time?”

“Just over ten thousand,” Yang Jian said.

“I don’t believe it. You’re so capable, you even cleared out Manager Li’s wife’s private stash. You’ve been running around for a week, how could you have possibly made just over ten thousand? You must be lying to me,” she said.

Jiang Yan said, “Tell me, come on, I’m your accountant after all. If I don’t know about your cash situation, how can I manage your assets for you?”

Yang Jian thought for a moment, “Just over ten thousand.”

“How much over?”

“Not much, 550 million,” Yang Jian said.

“What?”

Jiang Yan, startled, leaped from the bed, her eyes wide and mouth agape as if she had seen a ghost, “Five hundred million? What on earth have you been doing these few days, you didn’t rob a bank, did you?”

“Robbing a bank isn’t as fast as what I make, and besides, stealing five hundred million would require hitting a few bank vaults. Plus, it’s illegal and could easily land me in prison. I’m meant to become the boss of Dachang City, why would I do something so criminal?” Yang Jian said.

“You’re right; robbery definitely isn’t as lucrative as what you earn,” Jiang Yan couldn’t help but swallow and her eyes lit up.

Before, Yang Jian was worth around twenty million, which made him modestly wealthy at best. But now with over five hundred million, he was truly wealthy.

A tycoon indeed!

Not only had she secured a solid support, but it was also a golden one.

She was set for life.

“Now that you have so much money, can you maybe lend me some? It’s an emergency, I’m about to starve,” she pleaded.

Jiang Yan leaned over, wrapping her arm around his, pressing her mature body against him deliberately, with a coquettish and tempting tone.

Yang Jian said, “These days there are people who borrow money from parents, friends, banks, but who ever heard of borrowing from their boss? Besides, next month I’ll give you your salary, at the highest market rate. Don’t worry, you won’t starve to death.”

“Don’t be like that. When the money from the stock market comes in, I’ll pay you back. Plus, if I can’t pay off my debts, they’ll take back this house, and then you’ll have nowhere to live,” Jiang Yan pleaded desperately.

“Your words remind me, I was actually planning to buy a house a bit away from the city center today. I won’t be living here in a few days,” Yang Jian said.

“Don’t, don’t, can’t you forgive my slip of the tongue? How about this, five million, no, ten million, just give me ten million, and I, I will...” Jiang Yan’s eyes flickered, suddenly resolute.

Yang Jian asked, “You’ll what?”

“I’ll mortgage myself to you, from now on I’ll be your person, working for you,” she said, her face reddening even though she was usually rather thick-skinned.

Pretending to work was just a cover for being kept.

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“You wish, marrying off at your age? Looking for a long-term meal ticket, aren’t you? In my view, in no more than ten years, I’ll have to let you go, because by then, you’ll be older and won’t be able to keep up with the work efficiency.” Yang Jian flatly refused.

Jiang Yan almost spurted out blood when she heard this.

Who says I can’t get married with my youthful beauty?

I treat you like a man, but you treat me like a maid. Are you blind? Don’t you want a beauty like me?

If I hadn’t set my sights on you, kid, let alone ten million, even fifty million... well, fifty million I might consider.

“You can’t just watch me die, right? The debt collectors will definitely come to collect, and by then, I’ll be dead...” Jiang Yan felt like she was going to fall apart.

It wasn’t long since she had flaunted her wealth at the class reunion.

If others found out she was being chased for debts, she’d lose all her dignity and wouldn’t be able to face anyone ever again.

Moreover, she was even ready to sell herself to pay off her debts, and yet Yang Jian still looked down on her, complaining she was too old.

Though there is a bit of an age difference, it’s not my fault; it’s simply because Yang Jian is too young.

“Even if you don’t want to live, you still have to work.” Yang Jian said, “Once you’ve handled this matter for me, you can go and die if you wish.”

“...”

Jiang Yan stared at him oddly.

Now, she was beginning to doubt whether Yang Jian had any humanity left. She was in such a pitiful state, yet, with all his wealth, he wouldn’t even help her out?

“What else do you want me to do?” she asked weakly.

Yang Jian said, “I plan to give you four billion in cash to manage. You must exchange all this money into gold as soon as possible, and I’m not talking about gold stocks; I mean physical gold.”

“What are you buying so much gold for? You can’t even eat it,” Jiang Yan asked in surprise.

“With your intelligence, there are some things I really don’t want to explain to you. Just go ahead and do it, I’m not asking for a penny from you. If you handle this well, I might consider giving you a bonus,” Yang Jian said.

Upon hearing about a bonus.

Jiang Yan, now penniless from being trapped in the stock market, immediately leaped to her feet and asked, “How much are you planning to give me as a bonus?”

“How about five million?” Yang Jian considered for a moment.

Jiang Yan immediately hugged his neck excitedly and gave him a peck on the face, “That’s great, I knew you wouldn’t leave me for dead. Love ya, cutie pie.”

“There’s a catch.”

Yang Jian wiped the saliva off his face.

“Whatever the condition, I’ll agree to it,” Jiang Yan pledged confidently.

“I’m a reasonable person; I don’t expect you to work out of kindness. If you do well, I can reward you with five million, but you mustn’t embezzle a penny when buying the gold. You must try to get it for the lowest price possible, don’t mess around. If I find out you’ve been up to anything, you know what the consequences will be.”

Yang Jian’s hand gently touched her delicate neck while his eyes glinted with a hint of eeriness and indifference.

Jiang Yan shivered.

A trace of fear involuntarily appeared in her eyes.

Even though she usually got along well with Yang Jian, deep down, she was still full of awe for him.

He was the kind of man you loved and feared at the same time.

It was exactly this quality that gave off a unique charm that even he was unaware of.

A charm that men in modern cities lack, and what fascinates women the most... that is strength.

Daring to save people in a haunted mall, relying on his brains and ability to imprison a ghost that drove people to despair.

Daring to pull out a gun on Zhao Kaiming who came looking for trouble.

Daring to entrust billions of funds to her, a mere accountant, to manage.

Any of these feats were not something an ordinary man could accomplish, even Boss Tang who could easily fire her, or Manager Li in his presence, were like caterpillars learning to walk.

"Don't worry, I will definitely do it. I have classmates working in banks, some clients who own jewelry stores, and some resource channels. As long as I have sufficient funds, I guarantee to convert your four billion into gold in the shortest time possible," Jiang Yan said, her body tense with seriousness.

"Good, this card has over five billion in it. Transfer four billion yourself, and wire the remaining fifty million into a bank account belonging to Yan Li," Yang Jian said, touching her neck, feeling some cold sweat breaking out.

He smiled, "Don't be nervous, after all, I'm not Evil Ghost, I won't do anything to you."

"I'm not nervous. I'm just curious why you're giving fifty million to Yan Li," Jiang Yan asked.

"I owe him," said Yang Jian.

He was still very credible. When he had fooled Yan Li with a fake makeup box, it was out of necessity, just to survive.

Since they had previously agreed to split the money from the sale of the Headless Ghost Shadow, now that he had the money, he couldn't renege on it.

"Alright, that's settled then. Get busy these next few days, but not today, it's too late. Go take a shower," Yang Jian said.

Jiang Yan's face turned red, and she obediently went to take a shower with a soft 'oh'.

Tsk.

No memory at all, still so easy to deceive.

Yang Jian looked at the big soft bed and his face showed a victorious smile.

Time for bed.

While she was showering, he collapsed onto the bed and fell asleep.

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Chapter 127: Nighttime Shadows

Night.

On the bed on the second floor of the apartment building.

Yang Jian lay on his back facing the ceiling, spreading out in the shape of a big character, strongly occupying almost the entire bed.

Jiang Yan, in her pajamas, didn't want to sleep on the floor and could only curl up pitifully on the side, guarding her small patch, resembling a maid in a landlord's house.

Both of them were already fast asleep.

The room was silent with the lights off, with only the occasional sound of car horns coming through.

But as the headlights of a passing car swept in from outside the window, it briefly illuminated the dim room considerably.

The light shifted.

The area around the bed gradually darkened.

Behind Yang Jian on the wall, something was squirming in the darkness, undergoing some changes unbeknownst to him.

"Drip!"

A car drove past, casting its lights through the window once again.

The room shifted from dark to light.

When the light reached the wall above the bed.

Suddenly, a pitch-black shadow eerily appeared there.

Logically, with both Yang Jian and Jiang Yan sleeping on the bed, there shouldn't be a shadow in this direction.

However, the situation was eerily strange.

The shadow stood stiffly there, like a person, and it was slowly moving.

If one looked closely at the shadow, they could notice.

This shadow... had no head.

There was nothing above the neck but the illuminated wall; it was as if the head's shadow had been forcibly chopped off, it simply didn't exist.

Taking advantage of Yang Jian's slumber,

the Headless Ghost Shadow once again moved on its own, restlessly.

After all, it was a fierce ghost.

And while controlling a second ghost, the suppression between ghosts couldn't be perfect; one side would always be a bit stronger and the other a bit weaker.

To maintain balance, the ghost controller himself had to manage the scales, and negligence could lead to a loss of control.

Just like tumbling blocks,

everything so painstakingly built would collapse in an instant.

The crisis of the fierce ghost's revival would occur once again.

At that moment, the Headless Ghost Shadow slowly moved along the wall, inching forward.

It descended the stairs, then walked towards the front door through the living room, as if to continue its obsession.

To piece together a body.

The black shadow was stretched very long, almost like a thin line; and the form of the Headless Ghost Shadow became increasingly distorted. Before it could even reach the front door, it was stretched and pulled into an unrecognizable shape, leaving only a long black trail on the ground.

It tried several times in different directions.

Ultimately, the Headless Ghost Shadow couldn't stray too far from Yang Jian.

It seemed to have become Yang Jian's shadow, never able to escape this fate.

In the end, the Headless Ghost Shadow slowly retreated, returning to stand by the head of the bed.

It was motionless, like a dead body.

After how long, maybe more than half an hour,

the motionless Headless Ghost Shadow suddenly began to move; it slowly reached out its hand towards Jiang Yan, who was asleep beside it.

Having no other choice, it could only opt for this body.

However, just as its hand had extended halfway, it froze once again.

It was like a machine that occasionally malfunctioned.

It could not completely control its own actions.

But what horror lacks the least is time and patience.

Another hour passed.

The Headless Ghost Shadow moved again, this time it touched Jiang Yan.

Jiang Yan felt nothing and was completely unaware of the horrifying event unfolding beside her.

But just as the Headless Ghost Shadow gradually merged into Jiang Yan's body, its form hesitated and abruptly froze.

At this moment, Yang Jian, who was deep in sleep, suddenly sensed something and jolted his eyes open.

As soon as he opened his eyes, he saw a tall, slender, headless shadow standing by the head of the bed, with more than half of its form already merged into Jiang Yan's body beside him.

Jiang Yan's complexion was somewhat pale at this moment, and her body was gradually becoming cold, yet she was still fast asleep.

If she continued sleeping like this, she was likely to be silently killed by the Headless Ghost Shadow in her dreams without ever knowing.

"Damn it,"

Yang Jian's heart chilled, and he cursed under his breath as he immediately stopped the actions of the Headless Ghost Shadow.

It was as if the five ghostly eyes embedded in its body opened all at once.

A crimson glow shrouded down.

In an instant, the Headless Ghost Shadow was pinned down by the ghostly eyes and fell to the ground, once again becoming a mere shadow.

Everything quickly returned to silence.

It was a close call.

"So, if I don't keep an eye on the Headless Ghost Shadow, it starts to act up?"

Yang Jian sat up, his brow deeply furrowed, sleep completely forsaken, only a nameless fear remained.

He had managed to sleep relatively well that night, without the restless stirring of revival or being paralyzed in bed.

But, he hadn't expected that solving one problem would leave behind another.

From now on, he would have to stay alert for the Headless Ghost Shadow.

Even Yang Jian himself didn't know when the ghost might act up, so the most foolproof method was to stay vigilant 24 hours a day, ready to intervene at the first sign of trouble, maintaining this fragile balance.

But didn't that mean he would have to forgo sleep day and night?

Could a person withstand that?

Yang Jian fell into deep thought.

“I thought I wouldn’t have to worry about my own condition for a while, but it seems that it’s only slightly better than before. The threat of ghostly resurgence still exists; it’s merely been delayed.”

Even after controlling a second ghost, the crisis was still looming.

In the latter half of the night,

he didn’t sleep at all.

And perhaps due to some changes in himself, he didn’t feel tired.

These past few days, while Yang Jian was arranging for Jiang Yan to acquire Gold, he was also trying to discern the pattern of the Headless Ghost Shadow’s loss of control.

He found,

there was no pattern to follow.

The Headless Ghost Shadow would lose control at least three times a day, or as many as six times at its worst.

And the duration of its actions was also unpredictable.

At its longest, it could last for more than an hour, almost two hours, and at its shortest, it was less than a minute.

The fluctuations were huge.

Completely an uncontrollable and uncertain factor.

However, it was fortunate that even when the Headless Ghost Shadow was out of control, it chose not to attack him but targeted people around him instead.

Jiang Yan had been assaulted at least five times these past few days.

She just didn't know it.

"How can I completely suppress the Headless Ghost Shadow?"

That day, Yang Jian opened a newly cast Gold box.

Inside was a dark-tan human skin.

The human skin talisman from Huanggang Village, powerful enough to devour even ghosts, had shown itself to be more terrifying than malevolent spirits to Yang Jian.

Ever since that time, he had been extremely wary of the human skin talisman, so much so that he had a Gold store cast a new Gold box especially for it in the past few days and had the talisman carefully locked inside.

The human skin talisman inside the Gold box was silent at this moment.

No dark script emerged, and it did not respond to Yang Jian.

“This human skin underwent some change after swallowing that ghost, a change I am unaware of, and it’s still ongoing,” Yang Jian pondered.

Since there was no response, he did not probe further.

Immediately, he closed the box and locked it.

He resolved not to open it again unless absolutely necessary.

This thing was exceedingly strange and couldn’t be relied upon too much, lest he step by step fall into the trap set by the malevolent spirits.

Chapter 128: Classmates Reunion

Just yesterday.

Yang Jian received a phone call from his classmate Zhang Wei, who said that there would be a class reunion today, urging the surviving classmates to gather together.

It was said that several of them were going to leave.

Some were moving away, others transferring schools.

Under these circumstances, Yang Jian felt it necessary to go, as this meeting might be the last chance to see the few remaining classmates in this lifetime.

Jiang Yan had been left in charge of the gold purchases. She had been running around diligently these days, so Yang Jian, seeing her hard work, felt at ease—even though money was flowing like water, they had indeed accumulated a substantial amount of physical gold in hand.

This gradually made him feel somewhat reassured.

If his calculations were not wrong, this gold might very likely replace various luxury goods in the future. Although not completely taking over the currencies of all countries, it would definitely become the most valuable thing in the future.

“Perhaps, I should buy a car.”

Yang Jian arrived at the agreed location by taxi. Although he owned a car, he had no choice but to let Jiang Yan use it for business.

Truly a sacrifice, all for the happiness of his employees.

“Yang Jian, over here, here!”

Just as he got out of the taxi and was looking around, he heard Zhang Wei, who was in a landscaped gazebo by the roadside, waving and shouting.

Others waved with their palms.

But Zhang Wei waved by sticking up his middle finger.

Yang Jian’s face darkened at the sight.

“Can’t you change that signature wave of yours?” he walked over, but only saw Yang Wei and Zhao Lei.

Counting him, there were only three.

“Just us few? Aren’t the others coming?” Yang Jian asked.

Zhao Lei, looking somewhat drained as if he'd been suffering from insomnia, said, "Zhang Wei called earlier and said they would come, but we've waited for over ten minutes and only you have shown up. Maybe they won't come after all."

"How can it be like this? They clearly promised. It's outrageous that they went back on their word and didn't give Zhang Wei any face. Xiao Yang, how about you make some arrangements for me?" Zhang Wei said gravely.

Zhao Lei said, "If Yang Jian asks them to come, they'll definitely come. After all, back when we were in school..."

He stopped there, not wanting to recall such horrifying things.

"Let's wait a little longer. If they really don't show up, then forget it. With what has happened, their mental state is probably not good. It's possible they're now too afraid to leave their homes," Yang Jian said.

Zhang Wei sneered, "If that's the case, then they're too fragile. Look at me, I'm perfectly fine. I eat when I should eat and drink when I should drink. How could mere ghosts and spirits scare me. Anyway, was the matter with those men in black settled?"

He said this, but he was wearing prayer beads on his wrist, a Bodhisattva hanging around his neck, and even a charm for peace and good fortune tied to his waist, which he'd gotten from somewhere.

He exuded an aura of an ostentatiously wealthy yet devout Buddhist.

"They got the wrong person," Yang Jian found a casual excuse, "But, why does your face look swollen? Heatiness?"

"No, from playing a game," Zhang Wei said.

Yang Jian asked, "What game?"

“A method on the internet to test if there’s a ghost in the house.”

Zhang Wei said gravely, “They say that at midnight, if you play rock-paper-scissors with your reflection in the mirror a hundred times, and every time it’s a draw, then there’s no ghost in your house. But if the person in the mirror wins even once, it means there’s a ghost in your house, and you absolutely must not keep living there. You’d have to move out.”

“What does that have to do with your swollen face?” Yang Jian asked.

“I was thinking, what if there really was a ghost? What would I do? So when I played the game, I purposely added a condition; a method to fight a ghost with another ghost, just like what Zhou Zheng said that day, that only a ghost can beat another ghost,” Zhang Wei said.

“After all, I’m quite the thinker.”

“What condition did you add?” Yang Jian asked.

Zhang Wei said, “The clever me decided, whoever wins has to slap themselves. If there really was a ghost, even if it beat me, I’d still end up slapping myself, which meant I’d be safe.”

“As a result, that night, I was so lucky I won all night long, and that’s why I ended up with a swollen face.”

Yang Jian was initially stunned, wanting to praise his cleverness, but then his brow furrowed, “Wait a minute, that doesn’t make sense. If you’re playing rock-paper-scissors with your own reflection, you should always tie. How could you win all night?”

“Huh?”

Reminded by this, Zhang Wei’s eyes widened in shock, looking at him as if he had seen a ghost.

“What did you just say?”

"I said, you're winning against your own reflection in rock-paper-scissors all night long?" Yang Jian repeated his question, "Have you been under a lot of stress recently, or is there something wrong with your mental state? Maybe you should go to the psychiatric department of the hospital for a check-up."

Zhang Wei shook his head, "Impossible, impossible. I've been resting every day, regularly enjoying chicken dinners and such, how could I possibly be under mental stress?"

"If you're not under mental stress causing hallucinations, then there really might be a ghost in your house. Otherwise, how could you win against the person in the mirror?" Yang Jian said.

"Oh my God."

Zhang Wei nearly jumped in fright, "I played rock-paper-scissors with a ghost all night?"

"Zhang Wei, don't scare me with ghost stories, believe it or not I'll cry for you to see," threatened Zhao Lei from the side.

"What bloody ghost story, I've encountered a ghost, and it was right in my own home."

Zhang Wei's face turned pale with fear, and even though he was standing under the sun, he still felt a chill.

It was as if the story he just told was real.

Not made up.

"Uh..." Yang Jian didn't know what to say at this point.

Was it that Zhang Wei's mental stress caused him to hallucinate, or was there really a ghost in his house?

Logically, if he had really encountered a ghost, Zhang Wei should have been scared stiff by now; how could it be that nothing happened to him.

"No, I need to call my parents right away and tell them not to come home, just say that the house is on fire," Zhang Wei said hurriedly as he fumbled for an old-fashioned push-button cell phone.

Yang Jian said, "If you tell them the house is on fire, your parents will definitely rush home to check it out."

"Then what should I do?"

Zhang Wei also felt that excuse wasn't good, "How about saying the toilet exploded at home?"

"I feel that if your parents find out you lied to them and you go back, you might get beaten to death, but are you really sure something's not right with your house?" asked Yang Jian.

"Of course, why would I lie to you about this, we're brothers," exclaimed Zhang Wei.

Yang Jian thought for a moment, "If there really is a problem, I can arrange something for you."

As he spoke, he picked up his phone and dialed Captain Liu's number.

While working on a case, Captain Liu who received a call from Yang Jian immediately complained helplessly, "Yang Jian, when you left last time, you caused me a lot of trouble. After you left, Zhao Kaiming threw a fit, and those of us at the scene have been scolded a lot. Although both of you are ghost manipulators, try to minimize conflicts so that we at the bottom can carry on with our work."

"Sorry, personal grievances should not involve you. I need a favor," said Yang Jian.

"What is it? If it's official business, it is my duty to help, but if it's personal, that's another story," stated Captain Liu seriously.

Yang Jian said, "It's official business with a personal touch, I won't make things difficult for you. There's a suspected supernatural event in a residential complex, and I hope you can take some time to cordon off that house, inform the homeowners not to return temporarily, and I'll call you after I confirm whether there's a supernatural event or not."

"That's official business, not personal at all. Okay, don't worry, I'll arrange for someone to seal it off right now. Give me the address," Captain Liu replied.

Yang Jian gave out Zhang Wei's home address, "The incident isn't causing much of a stir, don't blow it out of proportion, because I've only received some information, and it's better not to cause too much commotion before we're sure."

"I understand," said Captain Liu.

"Thanks a lot," Yang Jian replied.

"No problem, we rely on you ghost manipulators for handling these special cases," said Captain Liu.

Yang Jian made a few polite remarks and hung up the phone, "It's sorted now, your house will be sealed off soon, and then your parents won't go back. For now, it's safe."

"That's great." Zhang Wei breathed a sigh of relief.

"Should I go to your house later to check it out?"

Zhang Wei said with surprise, "Go to that ghostly place for what? It's haunted, forget about that house. I'll change to another place to live later, something like a villa, I still have several of those, and there's even an apartment in the residential complex across from us."

"..."

Yang Jian looked at him with a strange expression, "You have so many bloody houses, you should have said so earlier, just not going back would have been the end of it, wasting my phone bill."

"I didn't think of it until after the house was sealed off and then I remembered I have other places to live," said Zhang Wei, somewhat embarrassed.

"I don't want to talk to you anymore, you go think about what exactly happened with the mirror," Yang Jian struggled to suppress the urge to hit someone.

Just then, a car stopped by the roadside.

It was Wang Bin, Wang Yan's father, who drove his daughter Wang Shanshan over.

"Yang Jian, hello, we meet again."

Upon seeing Yang Jian, Wang Bin immediately presented a very polite smile, walked over, and extended his hand for a handshake.

"Uncle Wang, hello," Yang Jian replied.

"I heard that you classmates are having a gathering, and I wasn't too comfortable with Shanshan coming here alone, so I accompanied her. You guys don't mind, do you?" Wang Bin said with a smile.

"Of course, we don't mind....."

Before Yang Jian could finish speaking, he caught a glimpse of Wang Shanshan, whom he hadn't seen for a while, and his eyes suddenly narrowed.

Wang Shanshan stood there quietly in a dress, her skin so pale as if drained of all blood, if not for her eyes that were still moving slightly and looking at him, Yang Jian would have thought she was a corpse.

How long had it been since they had resolved the Ghost Infant mark incident?

Less than a month, right?

The once vibrant and beautiful girl, how had she turned into this.

Chapter 129: The Changes in Wang Shanshan

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Yang Jian frowned slightly as he looked at Wang Shanshan.

Due to the last school supernatural incident, and then the Ghost Infant incident, he had become quite familiar with her.

He thought that everything should have been fine after he removed the Ghost Slave Mark left by that Ghost Infant on her, especially since Wang Shanshan's father, Wang Bin, would definitely have called him if there was a problem.

However, this time,

when Yang Jian saw Wang Shanshan again, he found that she had almost become a different person.

Her skin was pale without a hint of blood, emitting an aura akin to that of a corpse, cold and bone-chilling, almost devoid of the vibe of a living person.

She appeared deathly and listless.

But because Wang Shanshan was a young girl, this deathly listlessness was somewhat camouflaged; after all, women tend to appear more yin and soft by nature, so people on the street just thought she was an icy girl, rather than associating her with corpses and death.

After all, she still looked very normal on the surface.

“Uncle Wang, how did Wang Shanshan become like this? If you don’t mind, could you tell me about it?” Yang Jian asked.

Wang Bin was stunned for a moment, then replied bitterly, “There’s nothing to mind, I had intended to discuss this with you for your opinion. At first, Shanshan seemed quite normal, so I thought there was nothing wrong and didn’t want to disturb you, but later I noticed something odd about her body and didn’t think of anything else, just took her to the hospital for a check-up.”

“After putting it off for a while, taking medicine and seeing no improvement, her mother and I started to feel that something might be seriously wrong with Shanshan, so during this class reunion, I brought Wang Shanshan here, taking the opportunity to ask you what exactly is happening to her.”

Yang Jian’s gaze returned from Wang Shanshan; although not a doctor, he couldn’t be sure exactly what changes were happening in her body, but if he wasn’t mistaken, the root of it all was probably the Ghost Slave Mark he left on Wang Shanshan.

Looking at the red eye pattern on her wrist.

It looked lifelike, like a 3D tattoo, as if there really was an eye on her wrist. The longer you stared, the more it seemed to send chills down your spine.

“Can you tell me in detail about Wang Shanshan’s physical condition?”

Yang Jian felt it necessary to know what changes this Ghost Slave Mark could bring to a normal person.

“At first, Shanshan was very normal without any problems, but then she started to behave oddly in just a few days. She would space out for no reason, mumbling and calling out your name,” Wang Bin recalled the past events with a sigh.

“Calling my name?” Yang Jian was somewhat puzzled.

“Yes, I don’t know the exact reason; I asked the doctor, who said that Shanshan had been greatly shocked, and perhaps because you saved her, she had a deep impression of you.”

Yang Jian said, “What happened after that?”

Wang Bin continued, “Not long after, Shanshan began to sleepwalk at night. I learned about it when coming home from work and heard her hitting her head against the door. I don’t know when it started, but around midnight, she would suddenly start sleepwalking, with her eyes closed, trying to leave her room.”

“At first, I locked the door tightly, fearing that Shanshan would wander off and get lost in her sleep. But one time, her mother and I tried to experiment by leaving the door open at night.”

“That time, Shanshan ended up sleepwalking out of the house, even making her way down the stairs and out of the community, almost walking along the road without a destination. I didn’t dare to continue and had to forcibly bring Shanshan back home.”

At this point, he paused, glanced at the pale-faced Wang Shanshan beside him, and went on, “I thought Shanshan must have been under some psychological stress, so I took her to the hospital for an examination.”

“And what the attending physician found was that Shanshan’s heart rate was constantly dropping.”

“A normal person’s heartbeat averages 75 beats per minute, but Shanshan’s heart rate was only in the forties when first measured. That’s a very dangerous state, with an imminent risk of sudden death, and it’s still declining every day. Just yesterday, her heart rate was only twenty beats per minute, and today it might be only in the teens.”

“The doctor in charge no longer dares to treat her. Such a heart rate, theoretically, is not possible for a living person. From a medical viewpoint, twenty beats per minute is a cold-blooded animal’s heartbeat. If this occurs in a human, there’s only one possibility—it’s a body that has just died.”

At these words, Yang Jian’s expression changed subtly.

He didn't know much about medicine, but from what Wang Bin said, he could understand the situation.

A person whose vital signs indicated that they shouldn't be alive, yet they were alive and well, able to walk and move.

This was indeed unfathomable.

A very low heart rate means a lowered body temperature, slower metabolism, and sluggish blood flow throughout the body.

No wonder Wang Shanshan looked so pale and had a coldness about her.

"Is there anything else besides this?" Yang Jian asked finally.

Wang Bin replied, "This situation is already very bad. If Shanshan's condition continues like this, her heart will probably stop beating soon. If that happens, is my daughter still... human?"

After saying this, fear and apprehension appeared on the grown man's face.

“

A daughter without a heartbeat.

Is this a human, or a ghost?

"Uncle Wang should have considered this situation at the time," Yang Jian said seriously, "To get rid of that Ghost Infant, a corresponding price had to be paid, and I had already mentioned the price in advance."

“But this price is too high,” Wang Bin said with some regret.

Yang Jian replied, “It’s still better than being eaten by that Ghost Infant at the time. At least you still have a daughter, she’s still alive, just with a slightly complicated physical condition. But you can rest assured, Wang Shanshan is human... at least until I die.”

As long as he was alive, Wan Shanshan could live.

Once he died, Wang Shanshan would completely transform into a Ghost Slave.

Losing all life signs and consciousness as well.

Therefore, Yang Jian was certain that Wang Shanshan would continue living in this state in the future.

“Is this a Ghost Slave?”

He glanced at the pale-faced Wang Shanshan.

At this moment, Wang Shanshan gave Yang Jian a faint smile, which seemed normal.

“No, the transformation isn’t complete, not a Ghost Slave. Although the life signs are weak, the essence of being a human wouldn’t change,” Yang Jian thought to himself.

As for whether there would be other changes in the future, he wasn’t sure.

Further observation was needed.

Ghost Slave.

It seemed to be more than what it appeared on the surface.

Yang Jian had encountered Ghost Slaves at school before, like the Door Knocking Ghost's Ghost Slave, which was almost indistinguishable from a fierce ghost.

"What are you guys chatting about for so long? Just now, I've booked a private room in the nearby hotel. Let's go eat first, and later I'll treat you to KTV. When night falls, you know what I mean," Zhang Wei came over at this time, looking incredibly sleazy.

The shock of potentially having ghosts in his house seemed to have no impact on him whatsoever.

Yang Jian said, "We weren't talking about much, just discussing some school matters with Uncle Wang. By the way, is everyone here? Just a few of us?"

Zhang Wei replied, "Miao Xiaoshan will be here in a bit. Sun Ren, that guy, dashed off five days ago, transferring to another province. He's definitely not coming. That kid is such a thief, telling us now. Before, he kept saying he would definitely make it."

"Liu Qi's family had an emergency, he's gone back to his hometown for the funeral. I heard his grandparents in the countryside had an accident, not sure if it's true or not, but he doesn't seem like someone who would joke about his family's life and death. I'm going to give him the benefit of the doubt this time."

"So, it's just the five of us for this gathering. Uh, Uncle Wang, are you coming?"

Wang Bin smiled, "I'm here to accompany Shanshan. It's not my place to interfere in the young people's business. Shanshan isn't feeling well, so call me immediately if anything happens, I'll be right over."

Although his wife didn't want Wang Shanshan to come out, he felt that such a gathering was necessary.

Not to mingle with others, but to be with Yang Jian.

Because this person... was extraordinary.

“Yang Jian, could you take care of Shanshan for me?”

Yang Jian replied, “Uncle Wang, don’t worry, all of us are here, nothing untoward will happen to Shanshan.”

“With your word, I feel at ease. Then I’ll be off, Shanshan, you should talk more with your classmates, you’ve been too quiet lately, which isn’t good for your health,” Wang Bin added another word of caution, then drove off.

“Is Wang Shanshan sick?” As soon as he left, Zhang Wei asked curiously again.

“Didn’t you hear what was just said?” Yang Jian asked.

Zhang Wei replied, “I heard it.”

“Yet you still ask me.”

“I don’t quite understand it,” Zhang Wei said, “It feels like something’s up, but then again, it seems like nothing’s wrong, I’m not clear whether there’s an issue or not.”

After saying this, he spread his hands in a helpless gesture.

“Then there’s no issue,” Yang Jian said.

Chapter 130: Bowl and Chopsticks

In the hotel.

In a large private room that could seat twenty to thirty people, there were only five: Yang Jian, Zhang Wei, Zhao Lei, and Wang Shanshan.

Despite the table being full of expensive dishes, the atmosphere was exceptionally bleak, even the servers felt it odd.

“Do so few people really need such a large table for a meal? With so many dishes, we can’t finish them all, it’s quite wasteful,” said Yang Jian.

Zhang Wei sighed, “From a class of over forty people, together for three years, to only seven left in a blink of an eye. And damn it, even among those seven, two didn’t show up, and one is late. I’m feeling sorrowful inside, and recently I’ve been very anxious, as if I’m going to drop dead at any moment.”

“Yang Jian, you don’t think I’ll suddenly kick the bucket one day, do you?”

“It’s all about luck, if we don’t bump into a ghost, everything else is fine.”

Yang Jian continued, “Even meeting a ghost doesn’t necessarily mean death. Aren’t we still alive and well? Don’t worry too much, just prepare your coffin and gravestone in advance, you’ll need them sooner or later.”

“What you’re saying does make some sense,” Zhang Wei replied.

To the side, Zhao Lei said, “By the way, have you guys been paying attention to any news about paranormal events?”

“No, why watch that stuff? It’s frightening. Better to stay home and play games,” Zhang Wei responded.

Zhao Lei fell silent for a bit before saying, “I’ve been keeping an eye on news and forums related to supernatural phenomena. I’ve found that the ghost encounters aren’t unique to us; there have been sightings and paranormal events all over the country, and many places have been cordoned off.”

“Take our locale for example, several spots have been sealed off. I’ve even gone to look. Besides our school, the residential area from Zhang Wei’s photo, a stretch of highway outside the city, and Renming Park have all been barricaded. Those places have been closed for a while now, with patrols standing guard.”

“I asked around, they say the residential area was evacuated due to a gas leak, very dangerous and no one is allowed near. They say the highway is under repair, but have you ever seen a road repair with a wall built right on it? That’s not repair, that’s a blockade. And that park, they claim it’s under renovation, but that’s an old park that hasn’t seen renovation in over a decade.”

Yang Jian was somewhat taken aback; he hadn’t expected Zhao Lei to investigate these issues after being so shaken up.

“You’re just freaking yourself out for no reason. Why go courting death? What if you run into that thing again?” Zhang Wei said, his fear of that thing profoundly ingrained.

Zhao Lei replied, “I just wanted to understand more, to be prepared and have mental readiness. Yang Jian should know more about this than me.”

As he said this, he looked towards Yang Jian.

He seemed to want to inquire further on the subject.

Yang Jian, however, wasn’t keen on discussing the supernatural events with them, not out of secrecy but because he didn’t want them to know too much.

The more they knew, the more fear and despair they would feel. If they became paranoid, their mental health would eventually deteriorate, and it would be a good outcome if they didn’t end up taking their own lives.

It was enough that they already believed in the existence of paranormal phenomena.

“Wang Shanshan, you’ve been very quiet. Not saying a word, do you feel pressured being with us fine individuals? Don’t worry, even though you’re indeed not as good as us in many aspects, we’re still classmates. How could we look down on you?”

At this point, Zhang Wei turned to Wang Shanshan, “And why are you sitting so close to Yang Jian?”

Wang Shanshan’s seat was right next to Yang Jian.

Out of twenty-some seats, only theirs were together; the rest were far apart.

“I don’t really want to talk. Just being with Yang Jian is enough.”

Wang Shanshan’s voice was almost indifferent, devoid of any emotion, a huge change from her previous personality.

“Alright then, I’ll just be a single dog over here,” Zhang Wei said with a complex look towards Yang Jian.

If only he had known that playing the hero would get rewarded on the spot and not in the next life, he too would have risked it all.

The four of them chatted about many things.

Such as their current situation and future plans, but most of the conversation revolved around paranormal topics.

Yang Jian also reminded them that events like these might become more frequent and to be cautious. For instance, it would be wise to invest in gold if feasible, which was sure to appreciate in value, and to avoid crowded city centers if possible.

Because the higher the concentration of people, the higher the chance of triggering paranormal events.

Therefore, being in the city center was not advisable.

Moreover, there was a Ghost Infant roaming the center of Dachang City. They had encountered it a few days ago, and who knows where it went these past few days to take more lives.

“Damn it, just talking about it is making me hungry. Where the hell is Miao Xiaoshan? She said she’d be here in ten minutes, but after ten, and another ten, it’s been half an hour,” Zhang Wei said, beginning to feel agitated all of a sudden.

“If she weren’t so cute, I’d definitely call her an orphan in anger.”

“She’s probably not coming,” Zhao Lei said. “After all, this sort of gathering has lost its meaning.”

“How can you say it’s meaningless? Only a few of us from the class are left, and we should cherish the fact that we’ve made it this far. Now everyone is going their own way, if we don’t gather now, who knows if we’ll ever get the chance to see each other again.”

Zhang Wei uncharacteristically said something quite normal.

But the next sentence made everyone want to hit him.

“Moreover, my identity as a local tycoon has just been revealed, who else can I show off to if you don’t come?”

“Ignore him, let’s eat,” Yang Jian said. “Wang Shanshan, you eat too.”

“I ate the day before yesterday,” Wang Shanshan said.

“The day before yesterday?” Yang Jian was taken aback and looked at her.

It sounded like she had just eaten.

Wang Shanshan explained, "My heart rate has slowed down, my metabolism has also slowed down, now I eat less and less,"

"You should still eat something," Yang Jian said.

"Okay," Wang Shanshan nodded.

When the meal was halfway done, Miao Xiaoshan hurried over. She pushed the door open, saw everyone, and quickly apologized, "Sorry, sorry. There was a car accident on the road. A taxi rear-ended a private car, and the drivers started fighting in the street, causing a half-hour traffic jam. I really couldn't make it on time, sorry to keep you all waiting."

"No problem, you're so cute, of course we forgive you," Zhang Wei said with a grin.

"By the way, who is this handsome guy?"

He saw a young man in his twenties following behind Miao Xiaoshan.

"He's my cousin, he drove me here, he was worried so he came along, hope you guys don't mind," Miao Xiaoshan quickly explained.

"Not at all," Zhang Wei said.

The young man smiled and offered his hand, saying, "I'm Shangguan Yun, may I know your name, classmate?"

What era is it that there are still people with the compound surname Shangguan?

It makes it sound so grand. Besides, you're an outsider, and you're really thick-skinned to join our survivors' get-together.

Zhang Wei raised an eyebrow and stood up, saying, "Nice to meet you. Nice to meet you, I am Xuanyuan Tiedan."

"?" Shangguan Yun looked at him in surprise.

Are there really such strange names?

"This one is Zhuge Dasha," Zhang Wei pointed at Zhao Lei.

"Xuanyuan Tiedan, there's no need for you to introduce me, I, Zhuge Dasha, can introduce myself," Zhao Lei said.

"Sorry, Zhuge Dasha, my bad," Zhang Wei said.

Yang Jian raised an eyebrow. Both of you think you're that outstanding?

"This one is Murong Erniu, and next to him is Duanmu Heiniu, although she isn't actually dark-skinned," Zhang Wei said.

"Damn, you guys are messing with me, right?" Shangguan Yun almost swore.

At first, he actually believed his name was Xuanyuan Tiedan.

I was too naive.

Yet Yang Jian found it somewhat unbearable to look directly at them. He really couldn't measure up to Zhang Wei, too embarrassed to show his face, and buried his head eating and drinking.

But while he was earnestly focusing on his food, he suddenly saw on a nearby table a set of utensils that had been used, with some leftovers beside it.

The chair at that position had been moved back, as if someone had been sitting there eating.

But looking around, there were Zhang Wei, Zhao Lei, and beside him, Wang Shanshan.

Including himself, that made four sets of used utensils.

But whose was that extra fifth set? After all, Miao Xiaoshan and her cousin had just arrived.

For a moment, his originally relaxed mood involuntarily tensed up.

Yang Jian remembered clearly that when they had entered this private room, the dishes had not yet been served, and no one else had dined here before them,

Meaning that this fifth set of utensils had been used after they entered the room.

But that was impossible because he had been watching the whole time.

Recalling what Zhang Wei said earlier about winning rock-paper-scissors all evening in front of a mirror, his unease grew larger in his heart.