

## Revival 251

### Chapter 251 Terror Continues

Indeed, as things evolved, even ordinary people began to sense the danger and terror lurking beneath the gloom of Dachang City.

It was not surprising that Wang Bin and his family would make such a decision.

Yang Jian was not a stingy person; when others came to him seeking help at the risk of danger, he would not easily turn them away.

"However, Uncle Wang, Auntie Wang, you need to be clear that this place is not absolutely safe, and I can't make any guarantees for you. Sooner or later, danger will find its way here, I hope you are prepared for that," Yang Jian said.

"Of course, of course," Wang Bin said with a smile.

As long as Yang Jian agreed, that was enough for him. He could tell that despite this neighborhood being somewhat remote, far from the city center, when he came around noon and took a look nearby, he noticed that many of Dachang City's big bosses had converged here, unbeknownst to him.

Not to mention, one could tell from the various luxury cars parked within the community.

"Then please sit for a while, I still have some things I need to take care of. If you have any requests, go find Jiang Yan," Yang Jian said.

He now had no time to look after others, as there was still a great deal he needed to deal with. After a brief exchange, he left them in the care of Jiang Yan.

Fortunately, his own relatives did not live in Dachang City; otherwise, there would be even more people to take care of.

Because of running around for several days and a series of actions, Yang Jian's current state was not very good. Besides fatigue, his body was also in a very delicate condition.

This time, to use the Ghost Domain under suppressed conditions and push the Ghost Eye Resurrection to a substantial degree, he had reached a point where control was almost lost.

Although he had now restored a balance.

But Yang Jian felt that in the coming period, he definitely could not arbitrarily use the power of fierce ghosts again.

"What a complete defeat," he said to himself.

In the bathroom, the warm water washing over him, Yang Jian couldn't help but let out a sigh.

He looked at his body, where some areas of skin had turned a certain shade of blue-black without his notice, especially on his shoulder, the spot grabbed by the Fourth-stage Ghost Infant. There, a distinct dark palm print had been left, identical to the one on Wang Shanshan's wrist, only larger.

The appearance of the palm print meant that he too had been cursed.

"With my current condition, any contact with a Fourth Stage Ghost Infant will lead to a dead end," he mused.

Yang Jian rubbed his somewhat bruised shoulder, his face grim as he looked at the unremovable dark handprint.

"The curse has been branded onto my body. Although I might be able to drive it out with the power of the Ghost Eye, I'm afraid I can't bear the cost of using the Ghost Eye right now. Although no ghosts have sought me out at present, it's only a matter of time. However, I have the Ghost Mirror, which gives me a chance at resurrection..."

Thinking about the Ghost Mirror,

Yang Jian glanced at a small gold box placed next to the bathroom.

Inside it was that dark brown piece of human skin paper.

The paper detailed a very dangerous method of controlling fierce ghosts, one which he would never have considered using under normal circumstances. But now, backed into a corner, any method was worth trying.

Including this one.

He stared at the human skin paper for a long time.

For some reason, Yang Jian had a strange feeling,

As if the words revealed by the skin paper were beckoning him to walk the path it had laid out for him.

It showed him the future events, which he had initially refused, but when a certain moment arrived, the outcome was exactly as it had revealed.

Was it psychological suggestion as described by science, or could it truly foresee the future?

Or perhaps... it could control your future.

"I'll rest for a few days, build the safe house, and secure an escape route. Then I'll consider other matters," Yang Jian finally looked away, deciding not to look at the human skin paper any longer.

Although this object was very eerie, quite a few people actually knew of the human skin paper's existence.

Zhang Wei, Wang Shanshan, Miao Xiaoshan, and a few other classmates who survived had seen it, although they didn't think much about it. Jiang Yan had also seen it.

But Wang Xiaoming must never see this thing.

Wang Xiaoming had conducted in-depth research on fierce ghosts, and for the sake of a Ghost Coffin, he did not hesitate to alter files, ensuring no information leaked abroad. This meant that the existence of the Ghost Coffin could very likely change the current situation, but the human skin paper was even more special, being the only harmless and temporarily beneficial ghost to its user so far.

As Yang Jian worried and fretted over future problems,

At this moment.

In the hospital building they had previously explored.

"Bang~! Bang~! Bang~!"

The gloom hovered, and within the deathly still hospital, a sound of metal colliding, a knocking sound, echoed clearly.

The sound was steady, unhurried, like a machine at work, its rhythm unchanging. Anyone with experience could tell the frequency was not something a human could produce.

If you followed the sound deeper into the hospital, you would eventually find its source on the hospital's sixteenth floor.

It was a hospital room, missing half of its wall.

The knocking continued, growing louder, and the sound quality changed slightly. Now and then, a crack or snap could be heard as if something was being struck out of shape, even on the brink of shattering.

After an indeterminate time, a metal tearing sound, a harsh screech, marked the end of the noise.

From the darkness, the knocking ceased.

Everything seemed to return to peace, and the hospital once again fell into a dead silence.

In that room where the sounds had originated, a sturdy gold box had now lost its shape, and the sealed opening was now fully pried open.

It was empty inside.

At some point, a vague figure appeared, standing still in front of the glass wall next to the hospital room.

Not, not motionless.

Below the dark silhouette's jaw, something was subtly squirming, as if a person was chewing on something difficult, somewhat straining, yet savoring every bite, what they were eating was so tough it seemed unchewable.

Suddenly.

Something fell from the figure's mouth.

It looked like crumbs of food.

But as they hit the ground, the dark, bluish gloom swirled around, revealing through a slight gap that it was a piece of black, curved fingernail twitching slightly at the joints, perhaps it was just an illusion.

After about half an hour.

The figure against the glass wall stopped its chewing, presumably having eaten something. Then, it reached out for a piece of clothing nearby.

It was an ancient shroud, seemingly out of place in the modern era, the sort old people might be buried in.

The gaunt body seemed ill-fitted for the garment, yet the figure seemed quite pleased, dressing slowly and carefully. When it was fully clothed, a strange smile appeared on the figure's reflection in the glass wall, revealing a row of fierce teeth in its mouth.

All was done.

"Tap, tap tap~!"

The sound of dress shoes on tile came, and the figure walked out of the hospital room, disappearing into the dark corridor.

In the place it had been before.

A brain, nibbled to an unrecognizable shape, rolled off a nearby hospital bed.



Through the dim light drifting in from outside, one could vaguely make out that the head appeared to be that of the previously deceased Ye Feng.

The head rolled into the murky bluish gloom, eventually consumed by it.

When the gloom dispersed, the head had also vanished.

Nothing was left behind.

Only the surrounding gloom grew thicker.

In the restroom of this hospital room, the body of Sun Yi, missing his lower half, lay cold, his blood now coagulated. His eyes were still open in death but he was destined to be forgotten, quietly decaying in this unnoticed corner.

No one would come to claim his body, no one would remember him.

Just like the severed arm left in the corridor outside the hospital room, though the gold watch on the wrist ticked away, the owner of the arm was gone.

These dismembered corpses and the blood on the floor bore witness to a horror beyond the average person's imagination.

And the horror continued.

Death still hovered over this city, spreading incessantly.

Chapter 252 Harvest

Dachang City experienced such a severe incident that it was impossible to keep it concealed.

Although there were no direct reports in the news, due to the development of the internet, everything here had spread all over Asia through various information channels. Furthermore, some individuals or groups might be secretly fanning the flames, so even foreign forums had begun to report on the matter.

"Is it a chemical leak, or a mysterious event? Dachang City has been shrouded in gloom for ten days."

"Is it really a natural disaster that Dachang City hasn't seen sunlight for several days?"

"Do you believe that there really are ghosts in this world?"

Many such topics appeared on various online forums, as naturally everyone was concerned about a city in their own country mysteriously disappearing into the haze.

Moreover, the residents still alive in Dachang City were naturally sending messages to the outside world through all kinds of communication methods. They contacted relatives, friends, and spread photos to share the situation here.

"Don't believe any of that chemical leak or natural disaster nonsense; the real reason for the haze in Dachang City is haunting. I'm in Dachang City, and two days ago, I saw with my own eyes a pregnant woman in the residential area scream in agony as a blue-black infant tore through her belly and crawled out. You should know that she was less than ten days pregnant."

"That thing was definitely not an ordinary baby, it was a ghost."

A netizen claiming to be a local resident of Dachang City posted such a message.

But the response below was: To describe a cesarean section in such a weird way, it's a waste you're not writing novels.

"Another online ghost story, there have been so many recently, I'm sick of it. Isn't there anything fresh, like an invasion from a second dimension or parallel worlds?"

"If you want to know the real situation in Dachang City, hurry to Brother Wai's live streaming room. He's broadcasting live from Dachang City now, and you can even win a cash prize of ten thousand yuan for commenting."

"Heh, I'm least afraid of ghosts. You might not believe it, but I was trained on Dragon Tiger Mountain, and my family has a tradition of catching ghosts. I've lived in seclusion for many years, and it seems now I must re-enter the fray."

"Catch with what, a feather? You're going to use your keyboard to catch them?"

Despite the significant impact of Dachang City's incident within the country, the mainstream still did not believe it to be a supernatural event.

Or perhaps previous paranormal events were effectively controlled with the efforts of ghost-hunters.

But now, as the Dachang City incident brews, it could very likely become the most crucial first step toward exposing supernatural incidents to the entire national population.

If the headquarters of the ghost-hunters cannot suppress the increasing number of paranormal events, then sooner or later the existence of fierce ghosts will be known to the whole world. What kind of storm that might stir up, no one knows.

However, for some people, the outside world's reaction is now irrelevant.

"With the failure of this operation, Dachang City must be prepared for complete isolation to prevent the Hungry Ghost incident from spreading further and causing greater losses..."

Wang Xiaoming sat in front of the computer, typing a document, and wrote down the entire report of the operation.

He believed his failure had laid a very important foundation for future success. The four-stage transformation of the Ghost Infant, as well as the existence of the Source Ghost, had all been fully uncovered. As long as the headquarters had the necessary personnel and a targeted action plan,

the Hungry Ghost incident could be resolved; it was not an insoluble presence.

But for now, Dachang City, in its state of isolation and with a lack of external aid, could not be saved by the few remaining people in the city.

It had been four or five days since the last operation failed.

Dachang City had been sealed off by the haze for over ten days now.

This period was neither long nor short.

Compared to the beginning, the city was clearly beginning to die slowly.

The streets revealed fewer and fewer signs of life, day or night. Previously, there were vehicles and pedestrians on the streets, as well as some residents panic buying supplies. But now, aside from the occasional rat, stray dog, or cat, you couldn't spot another living person on the streets.

Perhaps they were hiding at home waiting for the end of the event, or perhaps they had already experienced the fear of being on the verge of despair.

Or perhaps they had already died noiselessly during this incident.

No one knew how many people this major event would affect.

But those who survived still had to find ways to keep living.

Inside the Guanjiang Residential Complex, Zhang Xiangü spared no expense in building a safety shelter. To keep the workers, he even went as far as offering ten thousand yuan a day.

But even so, workers were continuously leaving.

The progress of the project was getting slower and slower.

The only consolation was that there were no rumors of ghosts in this complex.

If not, then under the fear, all the workers would run off, and this project could never continue.

But as a key figure, Yang Jian was not nervous at this time, didn't care whether the project could be completed, and he didn't spare a thought for the situation and circumstances of Dachang City.

In this critical moment of life and death, he was actually playing computer games in his room.

"Brother Tui, left side, go around and take that one down, quick—I've already taken down three. If it weren't for Big Sister Jiang blowing me up with a grenade, I could have killed more."

"Damn, Big Sister Jiang, what are you doing lying there? Hurry up and help me up."

Zhang Wei was yelling at this moment, feeling especially exhausted mentally and physically from taking Yang Jian and Jiang Yan gathering with him.

Yang Jian alone was one thing, as everyone knew he was terrible, but Auntie Jiang Yan was like a cancer, throwing grenades at her own feet.

"Don't be nervous, I've practiced my shooting recently, I'll definitely kill him."

Yang Jian controlled the keyboard and mouse and charged forward, but the moment he showed his head, he fell to the ground instantly, and Jiang Yan, lying beside him, also died.

Game over, the screen turned gray,

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"How did I just die?" Jiang Yan asked.

Zhang Wei saw what had just happened and cursed: "Damn, this orphan, pretending all this time, I thought he was a pro. Brother Tui, do you have a way to go through the internet cable and beat this dog..."

But before he could finish speaking,

Suddenly, with a click, all the computers shut down.

The lights in the room also went out immediately.

"Aah~! There's a ghost!"

Jiang Yan screamed and stood up, running over to Yang Jian's side to hide.



"It must be a power outage, Brother Tui, did you not pay the electricity bill?" Zhang Wei said.

Yang Jian said, "I'm not sure, I'll check."

It was clear that it wasn't because of the electricity bill, but the power plant in the city had a problem. It's likely that once the power was out, it was never coming back on.

It seems the impact of supernatural events was getting bigger and bigger.

"You still have the mood to play games?" Soon after, Wang Xiaoming walked in, frowning.

Yang Jian put down his headset, "This is what you'd call having fun in the midst of hardship, something you wouldn't understand. What do you want with me?"

"Just now, the center of Dachang City fell, and Ghost Infants have appeared there," said Wang Xiaoming calmly, "There are... many."

"What does that have to do with me? The number of Ghost Infants has always been high, which is something we could've anticipated from the start," Yang Jian said.

Wang Xiaoming said, "You're the person in charge of Dachang City, it's your responsibility, and don't you know what it means for these Ghost Infants to appear in droves?"

"Of course, I know I'm the person in charge of Dachang City and I know my responsibilities, but that doesn't mean I should go to my death. Besides, I'm fully aware of the current situation," Yang Jian said seriously. "Previously, the Ghost Infants were hiding and killing people secretly, but now they've been released actively by something, as if they're being harvested.

If I'm not mistaken, the Source Ghost has started its reaping through the city."

"The evolution from potential danger to major disaster follows a very natural progression of events. It's precisely because I foresaw this situation that I started building the safe house ahead of time, right?"

Without the control of the ghost tamers, the Source Ghost grew unchecked.

Combined with the many Ghost Infants it gave rise to, one could have predicted what this city would turn into from the beginning.

But this worst-case scenario has arrived a bit too fast.

"The safe house can protect at most a dozen or so people, twenty max."

Wang Xiaoming's face darkened, "But do you know how many people live in this city?"

"You mean to say that I should save the people of this city?" Yang Jian said. "That's not the responsibility of a ghost tamer, that's the responsibility of Jesus, of God. Do I look like Jesus to you? What do you think, Zhang Wei?"

"You're trash," Zhang Wei said.

#### Chapter 253 Captain Zhang's Plan

Yang Jian said, "Listen, I'm not Jesus. I can only try to protect those who should be protected. Right now, you should feel lucky, lucky that you can still stand here and talk to me at length instead of being dead in that hospital's operating room."

"You still have the ability, I can tell, but you've chosen to hide it," Wang Xiaoming looked at Zhang Wei; "A person who should have died is still alive. You have some secrets I don't know."

"So what?" Yang Jian said; "Everyone has secrets, and you're no exception."

"Even if there's the slightest possibility, you should try. I know my request is excessive, but I've done everything I can, and there's still so much you can do. There's still time for you now, but once that thing reaps the entire city, any action you take will be meaningless," Wang Xiaoming said.

Yang Jian looked at him calmly.

Sure enough, Zhang Wei's death had been discovered by Wang Xiaoming.

Although he didn't know how, he must have left some clue that got recorded in the files by the many staff on site last time.

But Wang Xiaoming was only suspicious, not certain. No matter how smart he was, he could never guess the existence of the Ghost Mirror.

He was merely using bold assumptions and conjectures to discuss and reason.

"Are you done? If you are, you can go. You know my current state is not good, and I might recover at any time."

Yang Jian said, "Maybe once I recover, the first person I'll kill will be you."

"Professor Wang, don't provoke Yang Jian any further. The higher-ups have already made the corresponding arrangements. Right now, the most important thing for you is to stay alive for at least fifteen days under Yang Jian's protection," Liu Xiaoyu's voice came from the satellite positioning cellphone.

"Listen, my conscience is saving you," Yang Jian said with a smirk.

Wang Xiaoming was still stubborn, "If you have any methods, you can tell me, and I will do my best to help you. Besides, as long as this matter can be resolved, I will agree to any request of yours, the Ghost Candle, helping you to control the third ghost, or letting you access some secrets that are beyond your level."

"I can even recommend you to join the Captain Plan," he said.

"The Captain Plan? What's that?" Yang Jian asked.

Wang Xiaoming said, "Considering the frequency and severity of future supernatural events, ordinary Ghost Chasers can no longer maintain the safety of a city. So, half a year ago, headquarters drafted another plan, currently named the Captain Plan. The plan aims to devote all of the headquarters' resources to cultivating a certain number of top-tier Ghost Chasers."

"If you can resolve this Hungry Ghost incident, with such a great achievement on the table, plus my recommendation, there's definitely a spot for you among the future Ghost Chaser captains."

"That does sound somewhat interesting," Yang Jian said, rubbing his chin.

He hadn't expected there to be such a plan.

But after some serious thought, he also understood the true purpose of the plan. Currently, whether it's a Ghost Chaser who controls one ghost, or two, they still can't cope with the increasingly frequent supernatural incidents.

And ghosts can grow, and this growth rate is astonishing.

To fight these top-tier horrors, top-tier Ghost Chasers are necessary.

The Captain Plan Wang Xiaoming mentioned was thus conceived.

If one could be selected, it was indeed very tempting; with the resources of a country at one's disposal, it's hard to imagine the heights a chosen person could be trained to.

Ghost Chasers are naturally short-lived, and it's uncertain how long one can live, but if one could be trained as a captain, the problem of how long one could live wouldn't need personal worrying—headquarters would be more concerned than oneself.

"I've offered you all the conditions I can. Do I need to kneel and beg you? If you agree, I have no problems even kowtowing to you," Wang Xiaoming said.

Upon hearing this, Yang Jian's expression became stern.

To kneel and kowtow to oneself, his brother's murderer—could Wang Xiaoming really endure that?

"You're indeed very noble, I was almost moved," Yang Jian said.

Yang Jian's gaze flickered: "I won't hide it from you, I do have a secret or two, but that's not enough to change everything. Just like the day your action failed, you said it yourself, we have already lost because neither of the two conditions needed to resolve this supernatural event is met."

"Which one can you overcome?" Wang Xiaoming asked.

"I could barely handle another direct encounter."

Yang Jian thought for a moment and said, "But it requires some preparation, and the preparation is very dangerous. There's only about a 10%, maybe 20% chance of success, by my own estimates. If the preparation fails, I'll die."

"Who's going to handle the second condition? Haha, that thing is not an ordinary ghost that can be dealt with by just wrapping it in gold foil. If it can't be restrained, it can't be imprisoned."

Wang Xiaoming said, "We could lure it into the safety house."

"I refuse."

Without even thinking, Yang Jian rejected the suggestion outright; "I've already revealed so much for the sake of this city, that's the best I can do. Do you think I don't want to resolve this incident? Don't forget, I was the one who desperately imprisoned that fourth-stage Ghost Infant."

"If you can't take care of the second condition for me, I'm not even considering it. Don't even think about the safety house. If that's what you're planning, I'll kill you."

He immediately took out a handgun and slapped it on the computer desk beside him.

Zhang Wei, who was sitting next to him, carefully shifted a little when he saw the gun pointing in his direction. He turned the muzzle toward Wang Xiaoming, to prevent any accidental discharge.

Wang Xiaoming was silent, then turned and left the computer room.

Yang Jian's gaze flickered slightly as he spoke into the phone, "Liu Xiaoyu, you're not asleep, are you? You heard what just happened. I'm giving you three spots in my safety house. Bring me two experienced special personnel to watch Wang Xiaoming twenty-four hours a day, not allowing him to do anything but eat, drink, and sleep. You can arrange the remaining spot as you see fit."

"At this critical juncture, if he tries to pull anything, I'm afraid I'll make a mistake I can't take back."

"Understood, someone will be there within half an hour, ensuring Professor Wang doesn't cause trouble," Liu Xiaoyu said.

"No need to guarantee anything. If you fail, I'll just kill him," Yang Jian said.

"..." Liu Xiaoyu felt a headache coming on when he heard this.



Yang Jian was still as headstrong as ever, just like a child.

For Yang Jian, daring to touch the idea of the safety house was unacceptable. It didn't matter if it was Wang Xiaoming, an influential figure in the world, or even if the Deity himself showed up—he wouldn't stand a chance.

He might not fear death, not take the safety house seriously, but Yang Jian couldn't afford to block his own way out.

If the plan failed, wouldn't everyone have to pay with their lives alongside Wang Xiaoming?

It was a trade not worth making.

Sacrificing oneself for others is the work of the Holy Mother, not of a ghost controller.

Suddenly.

At this moment, Yang Jian's other phone received a text message. When he saw the message, his face showed an expression of constipation.

"You did the right thing, we shouldn't listen to whatever Professor Wang says, he'll definitely get us killed," Jiang Yan firmly stood by Yang Jian's side.

Zhang Wei let out a sigh and said, "I thought I could get through life just with computers, but it looks like I was too naive. I didn't even get to play games. What's the point of living like this? I might as well go out and play with guns. Brother Tui, you coming? Let me show you my newly practiced dual-wielding Gun Trembling Technique."

"I need to step out," Yang Jian put down his phone and frowned.

"Where are you going at a time like this?" Jiang Yan was startled.

Yang Jian said, "Playing Jesus."

"By the way, if there are any issues while I'm gone, find Zhang Han. Also, don't let Wang Xiaoming onto the fifth floor. If he insists on going up there, Brother Wai, use your gun to break his legs for me."

"Don't worry, leave it to me. Oh, by the way, which leg should I break if it comes to that?" Zhang Wei asked.

After thinking for a moment, Yang Jian said, "Either will do."

Chapter 254 The Dead City

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Driving on the silent highway.

The headlights illuminated the road ahead but couldn't dispel the gloom before my eyes.

The entire city was eerily quiet, save for the occasional distant screams and the wailing of the Ghost Infant—no other sounds were heard.

The once bustling Dachang City was gradually dying because of the presence of the Ghost Infant.

At least, all along the drive Yang Jian couldn't feel a trace of vitality.

Death was spreading, and fear was proliferating.

As Yang Jian looked out of the car window, his mood was dismal.

He was still pondering the words Wang Xiaoming had said before.

"He pinned all his hopes on me, tasking me with saving the entire city, but I've done everything I could. I've imprisoned that fourth-stage Ghost Infant, but what has changed? It's just a temporary fix at best, and too many have died over these days—Ye Feng, Sun Yi, He Chuan, as well as those ghostmasters I don't know."

"I've used up all my Ghost Candles, risking revival to augment my powers... and when facing the appearance of the Source Ghost, all I could do was run."

Yang Jian gave a self-deprecating chuckle as he drove.

Who's to blame for this failure of action when he had done all that he could? It was only the harsh reality to blame. Was he really expected to fight to the death to satisfy everyone?

"You, Professor Wang, can afford to be noble, to let go of hatred, to be selfless, and to be indifferent to your own life and death, but what about me? There's a whole group of people relying on me to survive. If I die, what will become of them?"

But now, everyone was looking at him, with no one understanding him or saying he had done enough.

To think that Yang Jian was only a high school senior, who became a ghostmaster in less than three months and joined the headquarters barely fifteen days ago.

All of this was too heavy for him to bear.

Facing this huge disaster, powerless to avert his fate, all Yang Jian could do was take care of a group of people and try to scrape by.

To fight again and fail would leave him truly with nothing; he couldn't afford to lose anymore.

"Bang~!"

Suddenly, a loud noise erupted, and a figure eerily appeared on the road from within the mist ahead, causing Yang Jian's car to jolt as it hit the figure and rolled right over it.

Shaking off his contemplation, he was startled.

Had he hit someone?

He pressed the brake, just about to turn back to check.

But then, from the rear-view mirror, Yang Jian saw the struck person slowly stand up.

That individual's pupils were hollow, pitch black, their body cyanotic. The head that had been smashed was slumped onto the shoulder, eerily looking at him.

"It's not a human, it's a third-stage Ghost Infant. Can these things now brazenly wander the streets at will?" Yang Jian's expression turned solemn, but he didn't utter a word.

As long as he stayed silent and the Ghost Infant didn't hear him, he wouldn't become a target of attack.

Even though it had seen him, it was useless.

It wasn't the Source Ghost, nor a first-stage Ghost Infant; just seeing him wouldn't do much.

Wang Xiaoming's research and deduction were correct.

Yang Jian hit the gas and continued forward.

In the rear-view mirror, the Ghost Infant stood there, still eerily watching him, until the car gradually moved away and its figure vanished into the mist, finally calming down.

"If it were an ordinary person in that situation, a scream would seal their fate," Yang Jian thought as he glanced at the now-vanished Ghost Infant, releasing a slight breath of relief while also feeling an inexplicable sense of despair. In a city like this, how many regular people, ignorant of the rules, could actually survive?

No one knew.

Right now, he didn't have it in him to deal with the supernatural events anymore. The failure of his last operation pushed him to the brink of reopening old wounds, and even though he regained control, he wasn't sure if he could handle the power of the vengeful spirits safely again.

He kept driving.

Though his destination wasn't the city center this time, he saw many strange things along the way.

There were corpses lying by the road, with their bellies split open and their flesh a blur of gore. Figures moved stiffly in the mist, menacing silhouettes, and puddles of blood with some remains of flesh and viscera.

Occasionally, there was a hopeless cry for help, laced with sobbing.

Yet no one responded, and more terrifying figures wandered through the mist.

This place had truly become a Ghost City.

Those who survived could only wait in despair for their lives to be harvested.

Yang Jian kept driving without a peep, moving forward.

Here, it seemed he was the only living person daring to walk the streets; all along his journey, he hadn't seen a single survivor.

He knew that under the shadow of fear, the city's residents had realized the danger. They hid in their homes, curled up somewhere hoarding food and water, trying to survive this Black Night and get through the disaster.

But Yang Jian knew.

It was impossible; even if they had stockpiled plenty of food and water, without resolving the source, they were all on a path to death. The only difference was whether they would die sooner or later.

"Yang Jian, the satellite positioning shows you've entered Dachang City. You don't need to speak; I know you're in danger. I just wanted to let you know, when it's convenient, there's someone here who wants to talk to you. That's all I have to say. I'm going to turn off the voice now and maintain silence," came Liu Xiaoyu's voice through the satellite positioned phone.

After she spoke, a rustling sound of static followed as she turned off the voice communication and ended the call.

Yang Jian glanced at the phone beside him and frowned slightly, not paying it much heed.

What's the point of a conversation at a time like this, an advance eulogy?



Soon.

He braked sharply and stopped the car.

Here was an old residential area in the Southern City District of Dachang City that was supposed to be demolished as part of city planning. However, due to its distance from the city center, the demolition work was delayed.

The dingy, dark, stained seven-story building appeared dirty and disheveled.

Its empty windows, black as night under the cover of the mist, exuded a particular eeriness.

The complex was silent and still, the air permeated with the stench of decay.

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This was the stench of decay emanating from a corpse.

A malevolent ghost had already invaded this place, remaining here for at least three days.

"Is it dead?" Yang Jian took out his phone and sent a text message.

"No." The reply came through.

"Where are you? When will you get here?"

"I'm at the entrance of the residential complex, I'll be there within ten minutes." Yang Jian typed back.

The text message immediately replied, "That thing is inside the house, be careful."

"..." Yang Jian put down his phone, his face expressionless as he walked towards the old residential complex.

Someone, I don't know who, once said that most human fears stem from the unknown.

Yang Jian felt this statement was incorrect; human fears should come from death.

Only those who conquer death can overcome fear.

Conquering the unknown can only help you understand fear, it does not solve the fundamental problem.

Although he knew the patterns of Ghost Infants from stages one through four and understood their methods of killing, when he once again found himself in this deathly quiet city, his whole body was still tense. Even now, striding confidently and ostensibly safely through the city.

Walking along, who knows how many ghosts were watching him from under the darkness of the gloom.

Those pairs of empty and dark eerie eyes seemed to be right behind him, engaging him in a gaze as soon as he turned around.

"Building three, fourth floor."

Yang Jian arrived in front of the third building.

Due to a power outage, the stairwell was pitch-black, where one could not see their own fingers in front of them. Even the flashlight on his phone could hardly dispel the gloom a step or two away. Who knew what one might accidentally bump into once inside? If you accidentally touched a Ghost Infant from the Second Stage, that would be hitting the jackpot.

The prize was death.

When was the last time he faced such a dark staircase?

Right, it was during his time at school.

It was when he, along with Zhang Wei, Wang Shanshan, and a group of people, were experiencing the Ghost Door Knocker incident.

"Wait, the Ghost Door Knocker incident?" Yang Jian, who had been moving forward slowly, suddenly stopped in his tracks.

A strange place he had forgotten once again surfaced in his mind.

It was the place the school's stairwell bathroom led to.

A peculiar space not of this world.

There was nothing there but darkness, with only one tree that seemed to have grown from towering white bones, on which was nailed a three-meter-tall Ghost Shadow. His Ghost Eye ability had come from that place.

"The second condition could perhaps be satisfied." Yang Jian's eyes flickered as he fell into deep thought.

He thought of a way to imprison the Source Ghost, using the Coffin Nail from that White Bone Tree, which pinned the huge Ghost Shadow.

If the Coffin Nail could hold that shadow, it could also hold the Source Ghost.

The finger was already lost; that Coffin Nail could likely act as a substitute to pin down the Source Ghost.

However, as a consequence, that unknown shadow would be released.

"Why am I thinking of this, confining one terror to release another, which might be even more vicious, potentially making the situation far worse." Yang Jian silently cursed himself for being an idiot.

Yet another thought appeared.

Even if the situation got worse, it couldn't be worse than it was now, could it?

At the moment, the lives of an entire city's population hung in the balance.

"Stop thinking, just be a shrinking turtle honestly; the hero thing doesn't suit me."

He shook his head, casting out these strange thoughts, and continued up the stairs, hugging the wall step by cautious step.

Unable to use the abilities of the Ghost Eye and Ghost Shadow recklessly, Yang Jian opted for caution and carefulness.

Relying on his understanding of the patterns of all Ghost Infants, he wasn't too worried.

The only thing to be vigilant about was encountering a Fourth Stage Ghost Infant.

But the chances were slim.

The city was vast, and despite being cursed, it would probably take some time before it was his turn.

Counting the floors one by one.

Soon, he reached the fourth floor.

At one residential door, which was already open, the adjacent wall bore several dark, bluish handprints.

The solid iron door was twisted and deformed, as though something had ripped it open by force, sending a chill down one's spine.

A pungent scent of blood wafted from the dark living room, mixed with a strong odor of decay.

Clearly, a desperate terror had occurred here a few days ago, though it was unknown who had died.

Yang Jian walked in as usual, his expression unchanged.

The ground was somewhat slippery with coagulated blood yet to dry.

Upon illumination, it covered the floor beneath his feet.

Amidst the blood, there were distinct scratch marks.

The marks stretched into a room, as if someone had been dragged in by something, struggling and despairing all the way.

He moved forward.

Yang Jian saw the broken nails of a woman, still painted with purple nail polish, and noticed scattered black hair, stuck with dried blood, turning black and foul.

Just as he was about to move further, his steps abruptly halted.

In the mouth of the darkened doorway, a small, blue-black figure stood. It was biting its finger, innocently, with a pair of hollow black eyes staring at Yang Jian. Several strands of long hair, identical to those on the ground, hung from the corner of its mouth.

"Second Stage Ghost Infant, must not be touched." Yang Jian's expression shifted slightly, his heart skipping a beat.

Chapter 255 Yang Jian's Determination

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Actually, if he didn't look into the eyes of this little thing, Yang Jian thought that purely in terms of appearance, this Second Stage Ghost Infant was quite cute.

"It's really not easy to deal with this thing blocking the door, and there's no way to get around it from somewhere else. If I accidentally touch it, that would be troublesome. Then I'd be forced to use the power of a fierce ghost again, which wouldn't be worth it."

After staring deeply into the eyes of the Ghost Infant for a moment, Yang Jian suddenly grabbed a chair from beside the living room.



With a forceful toss.

"Bang~!"

A loud noise sounded as the heavy chair smashed directly onto the Ghost Infant, sending it flying into the pitch-black room.

"That's really cruel." Yang Jian felt ashamed of his violent methods. If this scene were to be exposed online, he would definitely be verbally lynched the next time he stepped outside.

After waiting for a while.

The Ghost Infant still hadn't come out, and there was no movement in the room, which made him feel a bit awkward.

Didn't this thing have any temper at all? He had gone so far and it still didn't show any reaction?

No helping it.

If it wouldn't come out, he would have to go in. After all, he had already cleared the way.

Yang Jian walked in and saw a dismembered corpse. The style of the clothing was somewhat familiar, which made him slightly vigilant. If the Zhang Liqin he was supposed to meet had died here, then who was the person that had just sent him a text message?

Could it be a trap?

A trap laid by a fierce ghost to lure and kill him?

At this thought, Yang Jian instantly felt a chill surge up from his feet, spreading throughout his body.

To quickly ascertain this fact, he hurriedly searched around the corpse.

He was looking for the head that had remained with the body, to identify the identity of the deceased.

Soon.

Yang Jian saw a head by the bedside table, rolled into a corner.

Incomplete, bloodied, and blurred.

He wasn't afraid of a Dead Man's Head but simply reached out to fiddle with it, turning the face of the head on the ground face up.

"Who in the hell is this?" Yang Jian frowned.

But the face was unrecognizable, features missing, the skin peeled back, soaked in blood. Not only him, but even this person's own mother wouldn't be able to recognize them.

As he was trying to identify who the head belonged to, there was a flicker of light from a cellphone at the other end of the room, in the direction of the balcony.

Flashing on and off.

Despite the dimness shrouded by gloom, it was still very conspicuous.

"Is there someone on the balcony?"

Yang Jian immediately stood up and walked towards the balcony.

Having stayed here for so long without incident, the possibility of a trap was likely non-existent; perhaps he had just been scaring himself, being overly suspicious.

With the presence of the Ghost Infant, other supernatural occurrences were unlikely to happen. Even if they did, the Hungry Ghost would have dealt with them.

Yang Jian arrived at the balcony and took a look.

A blinding light immediately shone onto his face, causing him to squint involuntarily and take a step back subconsciously.

Before he could recover, a figure quickly stood up from the corner, flung itself into his arms, hugged him tightly, and started to sob softly, their whole body trembling uncontrollably from excessive fear.

Yang Jian felt the warm, mature body in his arms and looked at Zhang Liqin's haggard and fearful expression. Without a word, he picked her up horizontally and quickly left the room.

As he passed by the corpse, he glanced at it.

The silhouette of a child stood within the gloom, still eerily watching this place.

It was separated from Zhang Liqin by only a wall.

Yang Jian really felt admiration for this woman. In such a desperate situation, she had managed to survive for two or three days, which would have been enough to break a normal person.

But...

Feeling the trembling and fear emanating from the woman's body, he guessed that a considerable psychological shadow had formed, much like Jiang Yan before. Aside from the time she spent living with him, Jiang Yan dared not sleep without the lights on. Even during the day, she would turn on every possible light in the house.

The departure went smoothly, as having confirmed the situation of the place, Yang Jian could act more boldly.

Throughout the entire journey, Zhang Liqin did not utter a single word—perhaps her past experience had taught her that remaining calm and silent was crucial to survival in the face of supernatural events.

He tossed the woman into the passenger side of the car, and Yang Jian started the vehicle, preparing to leave.

Since the Ghost Infant had appeared here, the normal assumption would be that there was not just one. A single Second Stage Ghost Infant wouldn't have been able to turn a neighborhood into this state.

Just as Yang Jian was about to leave, a woman suddenly darted from somewhere and desperately blocked the car, terribly frightened.

"I've seen you, you're one of the spirit controllers who entered and exited the gymnasium. I'm a reporter, please save me, take me with you. I saw what happened just now. If you could save that woman, you can definitely save me too..."

The woman frantically banged on the car window, hoping that Yang Jian would take her with him.

Yang Jian's expression changed, and without a word, he immediately grabbed Zhang Liqin's hand and directed her to cover her mouth.

Zhang Liqin understood instantly, firmly covering her mouth.

Yang Jian then took out his phone and wrote a line: Don't talk. If nothing happens to you within three minutes, I'll take you with me.

"Thank you, thank you." The female reporter was overwhelmed with gratitude.

"Don't talk." Yang Jian wrote another line and showed her the phone.

"I understand, I won't talk, I won't talk." The reporter nodded repeatedly.

Yang Jian: "..."

Is this woman an idiot? Does she even understand his warning? Look at Zhang Haiyan next to her, she covers her mouth as told, not even daring to breathe loudly.

At that moment, with the reporter speaking, several shadows suddenly appeared in the windows of many building floors in the neighborhood. It seemed as if countless eerie eyes were looking this way from the darkness.

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"Bang~!"

Then a dull thud followed, as if someone had jumped from a high-rise building and crashed heavily to the ground.

No,

It wasn't just one sound; to the left, to the right, the sound of impacts continued to echo.

"The third-stage Ghost Infants are coming." Yang Jian surmised that the female reporter had already been targeted by the ghosts in the darkness upon hearing the noises.

Saving her was now impossible.

But the female reporter didn't know it, she still thought she could leave this accursed place with the ghost controller. However, when a cyanotic arm reached out from the shadows behind her and grabbed her wrist, she finally felt despair.

"Ah~!"

A scream, a hysterical shriek born of utter hopelessness.

In her terror, she forgot even to call for help, the reporter was pulled into the shadows ahead of her without any chance to resist, vanishing into the darkness.

Yang Jian shook his head, silent, he immediately floored the gas pedal, turned the steering wheel and left the area.

"How come you're here?"



After leaving the danger zone, he got on the ring road highway, circumventing the urban area, planning to circle back - a safer option. He also wanted to make sure there were no third-stage Ghost Infants on the ring road highway before he dared to speak.

"I'm, I'm sorry." Zhang Liqin looked at him, with a pitiful and desperate expression.

"With my nature, even if something happened between us, I wouldn't necessarily come to save you." Yang Jian said, "You should have left last time if you had been smart."

"I'm sorry." Zhang Liqin apologized in a soft voice.

Yang Jian said, "You're not my girlfriend, you don't need to apologize to me. You saw what happened to that female reporter just now. Sometimes it's not that I'm unwilling to save someone, but in some situations, they're already beyond help. The same was true for her, and the same goes for you."

"Sorry."

Zhang Liqin cautiously looked at Yang Jian, like a child who has done something wrong.

"The person who died in that room was wearing clothes similar to yours, who was she?" Yang Jian asked.

"A colleague." Zhang Liqin replied, fear deepening on her face, as if recollecting some unimaginably horrific scene.

Yang Jian did not persist in questioning and instead said, "Did you finish what you had to do?"

"Some of it, not all," Zhang Liqin replied.

"Next time something happens, you'll need to figure out how to deal with it yourself. I can't save everyone, just like I couldn't save that female reporter just now." Yang Jian stated, "That female reporter was clever, recognized me, and knew it was safe to follow me. Too bad that intelligence was useless. In the face of such despair, one wrong step means death."

"You're lucky you know me." Yang Jian said.

"I'm sorry." Zhang Liqin still spoke quietly.

Yang Jian said, "You don't have to apologize, after all, asking for help is a human instinct, and it was my choice to come rescue you."

"It's not that." Zhang Liqin said shamefully, "It's about your car... "

"What about my car?" Yang Jian asked.

Zhang Liqin said, "Your car is a basic model, but I sold it to Jiang Yan as a high-end one. I made a ten-thousand commission from you. If it wasn't for that commission, I wouldn't have come to you to handle the contract and wouldn't have encountered the ghost on the road, nor would I have become involved with you."

"..."

Yang Jian glanced at her, "Why tell me this now?"

"I don't know, I just thought you should know, I didn't want to deceive you," Zhang Liqin said.

"Telling me this now is meaningless. Even if I've saved you twice, you still may not survive in the end. Not just you, I'm in the same situation. We can't leave Dachang City, and even if we did, there's no guarantee of surviving." Yang Jian reached over, pulled at her clothes.

A few buttons came off, revealing a large swath of Zhang Liqin's pale chest, marked with a sizeable cyanotic imprint.

The color was turning darker.

"Look at your chest, that mark is a curse. With that mark, you will eventually be sought out by that ghostly thing, and on that occasion, you will die. I won't be able to save you, because I might not survive either."

"Hearing this right after being rescued must feel quite desperate, huh? Heh, reality is that cruel. In fact, dying sooner like your colleague might not be the worst outcome, at least you wouldn't have to endure this endless terror."

Yang Jian gave a self-deprecating laugh.

Zhang Liqin did not speak, she fell silent, but she continued to stealthily watch Yang Jian.

"What are your plans now?" Yang Jian asked.

"Write a will, or leave some final words? If you're considering suicide, I can help you. We could even pick out a grave site in the next few days while we're still alive. That way, at least your body could remain intact, not scattered and gnawed like your colleague's."

Yang Jian hit the brakes, and the car stopped on the freeway. He then fell silent.

Suddenly, he pounded the steering wheel, "Damn it."

He didn't attend to Zhang Liqin but got out of the car instead, banging the door shut with a loud noise.

Standing in front of the highway's guardrail, Yang Jian looked toward the distant city.

He could see nothing.

The haze enveloped everything; looking out, there was only darkness.

It was like his future, no future, only darkness.

"This damned world, does it really leave no room for survival?" Yang Jian wanted to roar at the sky, but he could only clamp down on his teeth and swallow all the rage inside.

Noise would attract fear, and it wouldn't solve anything.

No one understood the pressure Yang Jian carried at this moment, except for Zhang Liqin, who noticed and tried to comfort him in the little way she could.

Not knowing how long he stood there staring in the direction of Dachang City.

Yang Jian seemed to have calmed down a bit as he got back into the car.

"So, where are we going?" Zhang Liqin asked.

Yang Jian said, "To gamble with fate."

He stepped on the gas, and the car surged forward, speeding wildly on the freeway. Its headlights illuminated the haze, cutting through the darkness as if to slice it open.