

Revival 291

Chapter 291 Dismissal

Although he felt a bit of sympathy for Xiong Wenwen's single-parent family circumstances, he was not ready to suddenly have a ten-year-old son.

He could only refuse this introduction.

As for whether his mother was pretty or not, Yang Jian was not interested. His own situation was quite dire, and he had no interest in going on a match-making appointment.

"You want to find a match for your mother, and that's a kind gesture, but you should know that people like us are not suited for settling down. Who knows when we might die in some supernatural event? Even if we don't die in an incident, our lives won't be long. The problem of the resurgence of evil spirits remains unsolved, so it's best to let your mother marry an ordinary person,"

Yang Jian informed Xiong Wenwen frankly.

Not to mention that most ghost hunters have physical and mental issues, even if not, getting married and having children would only add to the sorrow.

Yan Li, Zhao Kaiming, Zhang Han... those ghost hunters with families did not have an easy life.

Even Yang Jian himself, in order to make money for his mother's retirement, was driven to desperation. If he hadn't survived the Huanggang Village incident and delayed the resurgence of evil spirits, he would have ended up like the others.

"You're so powerful, you surely won't die easily. Ordinary people are all useless; faced with supernatural events, they only run and scream, not surviving even three seconds," Xiong Wenwen said; "If my mom is going to marry, she should marry the strongest person."

"Xiong Wenwen, I strongly agree with that statement. I'm increasingly convinced that I am the strongest 'dad' you're looking for. So... be my son," Cao Yang walked over and said, "I really don't mind if your mom remarries."

"You trash, you're destined to be cannon fodder who fails miserably."

Xiong Wenwen gave him the middle finger without holding back: "A dead man wanting to get married? Go home and lie in your coffin."

Cao Yang laughed and said, "Are you so sure Yang Jian will live longer? He's now famously known in the circle as 'Ghost Eye Yang Jian', and the burdens ahead of him won't be light."

Those who were observant could tell that, although Yang Jian had made a name for himself, if similar major events occurred in the future, headquarters would surely call upon him.

Surviving one S-rank supernatural event doesn't guarantee survival through a second or third one; any of those could be the end.

"I'm certain he will live longer than you, this useless piece," Xiong Wenwen said.

Cao Yang said nonchalantly, "Well then, let's just wait and see. The only skill I lack is being able to hold back. It seems like I'm the only one from our batch of international ghost hunters who is still doing well. Oh right, there's also Feng Quan; I heard he got caught in an event but was later rescued. I wonder how he is doing now."

While speaking, he glanced at Yang Jian again.

Cao Yang had met Feng Quan, who was also quite adept at self-preservation. In the early days, despite a very low success rate, he managed to harness two ghosts. It's a pity he still met with disaster. If Yang Jian hadn't rescued him, he would have been done for too.

Seeing that Yang Jian did not respond,

Cao Yang thought he wouldn't get any details about that special event, so he didn't pursue the matter further and continued, "Never mind, let's not talk about that. It's getting late, and I have to catch the next flight. The communication officer said that a special event happened in the city I'm responsible for. I don't know if it's a supernatural event; I have to go and verify it."

"Yang Jian, if you happen to pass by my place, I'll treat you to a meal,"

Leaving behind a word of courtesy, not wanting to offend Yang Jian, who seemed somewhat frighteningly formidable, Cao Yang quickly left.

The other ghost hunters had also been temporarily deployed from all over the country, and now that the event in Dachang City was over and they had stayed long enough, they were beginning to return to their respective jurisdictions.

After all, considering the current situation, there was a significant shortage of international ghost hunters.

The shortage was partly due to a lack of personnel, but the most important factor was the high mortality rate. Some international ghost hunters might not survive even a month after taking up the position.

The extremely high death rate made many afraid to become international ghost hunters.

After all, being cautious could help one live a bit longer.

Before leaving, everyone else greeted Yang Jian, who, regardless of anything, had demonstrated his strength. Even if he didn't solely resolve the S-rank supernatural event, his own abilities were not to be underestimated. Just like Lin Long, many coveted Yang Jian's Ghost Candle but dared not voice such thoughts anymore.

If Yang Jian were truly weak, then sorry to say, it wasn't just Lin Long who would claim the Ghost Candle—everyone else would too.

The strong prey on the weak; there's no reason needed, at most they'd give you some money out of consideration for appearances.

"I'm leaving too. I hope there's a chance to see you all again," Yang Jian glanced at Xiong Wenwen, Tong Qian, Zhao Jianguo, Li Jun, and others.

This gathering of various parties was unlikely to recur for many in the future.

However, just as he was about to leave, Wang Xiaoming popped up from somewhere again, handing him several printed sheets of paper: "I noticed earlier that there were man-made traces on your body, but they aren't perfect. I'm a bit of a perfectionist. I've just come up with a plan for your bodily repair. If you follow it well, you should appear indistinguishable from an ordinary person."

He had noticed the corpse spot marks on Yang Jian's body, reminiscent of previous conditions.

It was clear that someone had made changes in between.

However, the person making the changes lacked sufficient medical knowledge and theoretical support to repair the body better, which required some guidance.

"Okay, thanks a lot."

Yang Jian looked through the papers, which contained ideas and measures for eliminating corpse spots, restoring bodily functions, and altering the physical structure.

It was very precise and much easier to understand than his temporary study of several medical books.

"No need to thank me, you just showed enough value, and I only help those who are valuable and capable." Wang Xiaoming said with a cold face.

Yang Jian smiled, remained silent, and quickly drove away from the gymnasium.

"He is a very dangerous man, even Li Jun can't control him."

After he left, Vice Minister Cao Yanhua came out with a very serious expression, "Although he is capable and has made significant contributions, his immaturity and somewhat extreme personality could become a hidden danger in the future. If something goes wrong one day, I'm afraid it could be more dangerous than malevolent ghosts."

"Young people, how many of them are mature? It's already good enough if they're not anti-social. At least he's still communicable and can solve paranormal incidents. This makes him worth cultivating. Moreover, if you want someone to obey orders, and also to have the ability to solve S-level paranormal incidents, while being mature and steady in handling matters, that is asking too much.

Minister, this isn't the time to be picky. The contract system abroad has already trained top-notch ghost controllers. With the current severe situation, capable people should be put to work, regardless of their issues," Zhao Jianguo said with a bitter smile.

Although the thoughts of the higher-ups were not wrong, there was still a question of timing.

Cao Yanhua thought for a moment and chose to remain silent.

But he had a vague feeling that if these ghost controllers continued to grow, they would eventually become a particular existence that nations could not control.

It was just unknown whether the arrival of that day would be good or bad for the future?

"Set off, back to J City."

Wang Xiaoming didn't choose to stay in Dachang City any longer. He quickly left the place on a private plane with Li Jun, who was there to protect him.

This time, he had collected quite a lot of research material, especially the footage of Yang Jian hanging in front of the mirror, which, combined with his current research on Ghost Coffin, might lead to a new way to control fierce ghosts.

Although the success rate was quite low, if it worked, it would turn the tables again in the face of paranormal events.

But this needed some time.

Key personnel gradually withdrew from Dachang City, leaving only the rescue teams.

Some of the vitality had returned to the streets of Dachang City. Although there weren't many people, it was much better than the previous emptiness of the entire city, the Ghost City.

But the city had already been significantly weakened, and it was doubtful whether it could fully recover.

After all, the frequency of paranormal events was increasing, and according to current data, this seemed to be an upward trend.

S-level paranormal events were just the beginning.

But while driving back to Guanjiang Residential Complex, suddenly, someone burst out from the side of the road and stopped his car.

"Damn~!"

Yang Jian couldn't help but curse as he quickly hit the brakes.

With traffic control in place, there weren't many people on the road. Was there still someone trying to scam him, or had the paranormal incident pushed some people too far, driving them to commit suicide by car crash?

But when he saw clearly who was blocking the road, he was stunned for a moment.

It was an acquaintance, his former classmate, Zhao Lei.

One of the few people he had saved from the Hungry Ghost incident.

"Yang Jian, it's me," Zhao Lei knocked on the window.

"Zhao Lei? You're still in Dachang City? It's good to see you're okay though," Yang Jian first expressed surprise, then greeted him happily.

They hadn't met since the last class reunion and he never expected Zhao Lei to have survived this paranormal incident.

Surviving alone without anyone's help was incredibly lucky.

"I know," Zhao Lei suddenly said out of the blue.

Yang Jian asked, "What do you know?"

"I know how you became a ghost controller. You killed Fang Jing, killed Zheng Fei, Duan Peng, and about that piece of human skin, that eerie eye, the eerie tree..." Zhao Lei spoke haltingly and disjointedly, but revealed much information.

Yang Jian was taken aback at first and did not wonder why Zhao Lei suddenly knew so much, as they had experienced these events together. He knew about the existence of the human skin and had seen his own 'Ghost Eye'.

Wait a second.

How did he know about that tree?

Zhao Lei had never entered that dreadful place.

But before Yang Jian could continue to ponder and speculate, Zhao Lei said, "You solved the incidents in Dachang City, right?"

"I know you've been interested in ghost controllers for a while, but the more you know about these things, the worse it is for you, because they represent fear and death, not anything good," Yang Jian said.

Changing the subject, Zhao Lei asked another question, "The Wang Shanshan family is still alive, the Zhang Wei family is still alive, right?"

Chapter 292 Zhao Lei's Experience

Is something off with Zhao Lei?

Looking at Zhao Lei, who stood outside the window and spoke to him, Yang Jian, who had been in the same class and hung out with Zhang Wei's group for three years, felt a strange unfamiliarity.

This unfamiliarity was indescribable; it was just a feeling that something was off.

Yang Jian scrutinized Zhao Lei but didn't notice anything unusual.

"Wang Shanshan and her family are safe, but I'm not doing so well. Zhang Wei is still the same, playing games and streaming at home all day. Are you looking for them? How about we all get together? Even though Sun Ren and Liu Qi aren't back, and Big Cousin and Miao Xiaoshan are also absent, it could still be considered a small class reunion..." Yang Jian said.

"Shut up." Zhao Lei, who had been relatively calm before, suddenly grew agitated, slamming his hand on the hood of the car fiercely.

The car's hood immediately dented inward, and various alarm sounds came from inside the vehicle, with airbags deploying.

"Why, why did you save their family, but not ours? Is Wang Shanshan's and Zhang Wei's family's lives worth living, and my family's lives are not?" Zhao Lei growled, like a wild beast in a frenzy, seeming very emotional.

Yang Jian furrowed his brows, that strange feeling still lingering in his mind. Facing such accusations from Zhao Lei, he calmly replied, "Zhao Lei, I can only feel regret and sympathy for some of the things that have happened to you. Perhaps many of your family members have died in this paranormal event, but this is not the outcome I wished for either."

"This was a major paranormal event, no one could avoid it, I can only take care of so many people, there will always be tragedies."

Zhao Lei said, "So am I the only one left in my family to die?"

"You're not in a stable emotional state right now, calm down before we talk," Yang Jian said.

"I don't need to calm down, I need an explanation," Zhao Lei growled lowly.

Yang Jian frowned, "I can't give you an explanation, what you need right now is not to specifically find me to blame me, but to cool down, to think clearly about the root of the whole incident, so you can understand, the wrong person is not me."

"You are Dachang City's international ghost controller, you have a duty to resolve the paranormal events here, but you didn't do that," Zhao Lei said.

Yang Jian said, "No one can get everything done perfectly, tragedy happens in any city governed by an international ghost controller. We all walked out of No. 7 Middle School alive, we should learn to accept this cruel reality.

Moreover, I feel that your current state is very wrong, your emotions are very intense, but it doesn't really seem like a normal person's, rather it gives me the feeling that you are..."

"Like a ghost, right," Zhao Lei finished his sentence, his face turning from anger to an indifferent smile with a hint of emotionless amusement, "Because, like you, I have also become a controller of ghosts."

"Funny when you think about it, I've been searching the entire city for fierce ghosts without any result. When the incident happened, I specifically ran to your house to seek your help, but instead, I met someone who looked exactly like you, that wasn't you, right? Someone sitting there, reading a newspaper, motionless..."

Upon hearing this, Yang Jian's eyes narrowed sharply.

That thing?

He had searched for that thing for a while without success; he didn't expect it to still be in his old home, and to have been encountered by Zhao Lei unwittingly.

"How did you survive?" Yang Jian immediately asked, "That thing is very dangerous."

"What do you think," Zhao Lei replied, his smile carrying a hint of eeriness.

Seeing him like this immediately sent a chill through Yang Jian; some instinct told him that this state of Zhao Lei's was very bizarre and dangerous, unlike ordinary ghost controllers.

"Have you been influenced, or are you the ghost... The real Zhao Lei is already dead." His gaze hardened, staring intently at him, his Ghost Eye involuntarily opening restlessly.

Although there had been only one encounter with the ghost in his home, after being reminded by Liu Xiaoyu, he knew that the ghost seemed capable of altering memories without the person being any wiser.

Furthermore, the red newspaper the ghost hand held appeared to be able to imprint a person's face. As for what happened after imitating someone's face, he didn't know.

Because, when he was attacked last time, he managed to escape successfully without falling prey to that ghost.

...

"I know everything about you, and while there's still a gap between you and me now, I'll come for you to seek justice for my deceased family. From today onwards, we are no longer classmates."

Zhao Lei, wearing a sinister smile, slowly backed away, as if he was about to leave.

"Since you've put it that way, then I must keep you here today, I can't just ignore you," Yang Jian said, regardless of the peculiar situation Zhao Lei was in or any changes that had occurred to him.

As long as he had contact with the ghost lingering in his home, there had to be a problem.

Therefore, he felt that he should first restrain the person and then slowly investigate; if all else failed, he could send Zhao Lei to Wang Xiaoming and let him find the answers.

In an instant.

A red light surged from Yang Jian's body, and he disappeared from the driver's seat.

Appearing abruptly at the spot where Zhao Lei had just been, he intended to capture him directly.

But Zhao Lei was gone.

A piece of red paper floated down to the ground.

Blood seeped through the red paper, and the outline of a face clearly emerged on it.

The face on the paper was... Zhao Lei's.

"He really has had an accident," Yang Jian's expression changed slightly. Looking at the facial silhouette on the red paper, a bad premonition arose in his heart.

This red paper was bizarre, and it had even been held by a ghost at one point. Under the circumstances of memories being tampered with at will, Zhao Lei might no longer be considered a ghost charmer. Instead, it might be the other way around—he could be controlled by a ghost.

This kind of control, he might not even be aware of it himself.

Because no one knows for sure where there might be a problem with their memories.

Without hesitation, a tall, headless shadow emerged from within him, intending to collect the paper first.

But before he could act, a chilling wind whipped up around him.

Red papers danced in the sky, sweeping up dust.

The entire street turned into a desolate, abandoned place.

"Ghost Domain?" Yang Jian frowned.

He saw those red papers whirling in midair, each with a face on it—men, women, children, and Zhao Lei's... These faces showed expressions of fear, serenity, and despair, like a collection of eerie and frightening masks.

And at the end of the street.

There was a bench, like one you might find in a park.

Someone was sitting on it, only their feet visible. The rest of the person was obscured because they were sitting there, reading a newspaper.

They were motionless.

As stiff as a corpse.

Chapter 293 Searching for the Puzzle Items

...

"This thing actually didn't disappear during the Hungry Ghost incident..."

Yang Jian looked at the bench at the end of the street, and the person sitting on it, his expression becoming a bit solemn.

After the Hungry Ghost incident in Dachang City, local supernatural events had almost all been resolved by the Hungry Ghost.

That thing needed to grow by seizing other ghosts, assembling a terrifying body, so neither ghost controllers nor other supernatural beings could escape this Hungry Ghost incident.

Unexpectedly, after he had run out of his home in a sorry state, that ghostly thing still lingered there.

Yang Jian hadn't failed to go back and look, but he had never found it, after all, at the time he needed that ghost hand and the red paper within it to suppress the gradually reviving ghost eye.

He had gradually started to forget about this thing, yet today it appeared before him of its own accord.

"It's here that I'll imprison this thing," Yang Jian immediately firmed up his thoughts.

He was no longer the weakling who had just become a ghost controller; now, as long as he wasn't facing some terrifying and unsolvable fierce ghost, he could still imprison it.

Without hesitation, he opened the Ghost Domain directly.

The ghost eye emitted a red light.

But in the next moment, he was taken aback.

Red papers filled the sky, blocking his vision and also obstructing the opening of the Ghost Domain.

"Could this thing be born to suppress the ghost eye?" Yang Jian furrowed his eyebrows, recalling past experiences, and immediately discarded the idea of using the ghost eye.

Then, a black shadow gradually emerged from his body. This shadow took on the shape of a human outline and overlapped with Yang Jian's body, completely engulfing it.

Now, Yang Jian's body had completely turned into a Ghost Shadow, only the head on his neck still remained.

At first glance, it looked like a shadow with a human head on top. The head wasn't dead, still lively, eyes firmly staring ahead, sending chills down one's spine; this strange and incoherent combination looked unusually eerie.

If it wasn't for the fact that Yang Jian could still maintain consciousness, he himself would be a supernatural event.

The Ghost Shadow covered his body, replacing the normal flesh, and everything below the head had completely turned into a ghost.

Moreover, the revival of the Ghost Shadow also began to affect the surrounding objects.

Beneath Yang Jian's feet, a dense darkness like ink slowly diffused around, as if to congeal into a dark mass that would engulf the entire street.

After a few days of rest and recovery, he had been busy; his control over the Headless Ghost Shadow had improved another level, and without the ghost eye, he would not be weaker.

Because the Headless Ghost Shadow had crashed, Yang Jian could use this power temporarily without worrying about its revival, so various attempts could be made.

But the thing sitting at the end of the street reading the newspaper seemed not to plan to do nothing.

A strange cold wind began to blow around.

The red paper flew through the air, with a human face on each sheet, each face filled with expressions of despair, fear, and breakdown. These expressions interwoven together, made one feel as if they were in hell, filled with negativity, without a glimmer of light or hope.

The face on the back of each paper might represent an innocent person who had been attacked, and those expressions of despair were what they left behind before dying.

Yang Jian was definitely not the first target attacked, and Zhao Lei is definitely not the last.

God knows how many faces this ghost has collected.

The red paper with faces flew to the ground and stuck there motionless; flying onto the expanding Ghost Shadow, they pressed down like a heavy stone, and the surrounding Ghost Shadow astonishingly lost its ability to move, entering into a still state.

It was as if they were suppressed.

More red paper flew toward Yang Jian, especially those with faces, now wearing sinister expressions, diving straight for his face.

They seemed to want to cover Yang Jian's face with the faces on the red paper, to give him a new face.

Once the face-changing succeeded, what would happen next was unknown, but it certainly wouldn't be good; perhaps Yang Jian would even have his memory altered there and then, becoming a puppet to this ghost.

Every ghost's ability is very unique, and some are inherently unsolvable.

"Ghost Shadow gets suppressed by this red paper? Although it's just a small part, this is already unimaginable. If used well, it might not be a Coffin Nail, but no matter how strange the ability, it's useless if it can't fully suppress. As long as it doesn't have a high Terror Level and that thing doesn't succeed, I won't lose," Yang Jian thought to himself.

He then emotionlessly grabbed one of his own arms.

"Crack~!"

The black arm was removed, revealing his real body underneath.

Yang Jian used the power of the Ghost Shadow to remove part of the Ghost Shadow's body.

This was a new way to use it, inspired by the Coffin Nail that had imprisoned the Hungry Ghost.

The arm of the Ghost Shadow in Yang Jian's hand was then thrown out like a javelin.

Altered by a fierce ghost, his body had strength beyond that of ordinary people, and the arm of the Ghost Shadow instantly pierced through several of the red papers with faces that were coming towards him, flying out at a terrifying speed.

After all, the Ghost Shadow could also seize the bodies of other ghosts, which itself is a form of suppression. Using this suppressive power as a weapon is feasible, and although it's not as easy as the Coffin Nail which could easily solve the Hungry Ghost, Yang Jian was confident he could suppress ghosts that didn't have a high Terror Level.

Although the ghost eye on his forehead couldn't smoothly open the Ghost Domain, it could still lock onto the person reading the newspaper at the end of the street.

This attack couldn't possibly go wrong.

...

The next moment.

The person sitting on the bench collapsed onto the ground, the red newspaper in their hand pierced through, the arm of the Ghost Shadow like a javelin, impaling it.

"Did it work?"

Yang Jian felt uncertain, as this was his first attempt at using such an ability. If he failed, he would have to consider another method of harnessing the power of a malevolent ghost.

However, practicing on a ghost with a relatively low threat level was a good opportunity. If successful, it meant that from now on, he would have a means to counterattack malevolent ghosts, without having to desperately search for patterns as he did in previous paranormal incidents, utilizing the ghosts' behavioral flaws to imprison them.

It seemed to be effective.

The desolate streets around him suddenly seemed to return to normal.

Pedestrians began to appear around the street, and the face-shaped papers fluttering around Yang Jian fell to the ground, no longer eerie.

Yang Jian glanced at them, they were blood-streaked human skins face.

They seemed as if they had just been freshly peeled off the skin of living people, and each face was intact, even the eyelids, as if they still had bodies, then there would be actual living persons.

Ignoring these things, he knew they were just paranormal manifestations derived from malevolent ghosts.

The source was only one.

He strode over to see what the outcome looked like.

However, as Yang Jian approached, he paused slightly in surprise.

A few scattered, tattered clothes on the ground.

A human skin face that had already ruptured, not belonging to Zhao Lei, but to an unknown woman, likely an innocent victim.

Beyond that, there were no other victims.

"False, just something akin to a decoy. The real Zhao Lei probably took the opportunity to escape when he made his move earlier," Yang Jian frowned. "Did this guy come to find me knowing that the red paper could suppress my eyes and thus was fearless?"

His own Ghost Domain was under suppression, and with abilities similar to the Ghost Domain, indeed, he had the capital to flaunt before him.

However, Yang Jian didn't think Zhao Lei could still be considered a normal ghost master. He believed Zhao Lei's memories had been completely altered, indirectly manipulated by that ghost; otherwise, his personality wouldn't have become this unrecognizable, a complete change from before.

Pushing aside the pile of ragged clothes and retrieving the arm of the Ghost Shadow, Yang Jian saw the words Zhao Lei had left with his blood: We will meet again, now is not the time.

"Liu Xiaoyu, issue a warrant for Zhao Lei," Yang Jian said.

Ignoring the message, he turned back to his car, picked up the satellite-locating phone, and directly connected with the communications officer.

Liu Xiaoyu was stunned upon receiving his call.

Hadn't the incident in Dachang City already concluded? What else had happened?

Nevertheless, Yang Jian indeed had the authority to issue a warrant, and could nationally pursue an individual provided the conditions were met.

"Zhao Lei? Who is he? Do you have any related files over there, what crime did he commit?" Liu Xiaoyu didn't ask too much, only some basic information.

"My classmate, the one who survived from No. 7 Middle School. You should have a record over there. He is now suspected of being controlled by a malevolent ghost, yet he has retained his own thoughts and intelligence, and seems to have inherited a part of my memory, he is well aware of my circumstances, the specifics are unclear since there's only been one encounter, so it's merely speculation.

But I'm certain Zhao Lei is an anomaly, if left unattended, it will lead to major problems," Yang Jian spoke directly.

Liu Xiaoyu was dumbfounded upon hearing this.

Are you kidding me? Such a thing happened?

"Alright, I'll issue the warrant immediately," Liu Xiaoyu didn't ask for evidence.

In Dachang City, Yang Jian's words were evidence enough, no need for reasons.

"Notify me immediately if he's found, I'll deal with him," Yang Jian said.

Given Zhao Lei's situation, there was no longer any need to be concerned about him being a classmate.

But even though he said this, he didn't hold much confidence in being able to find Zhao Lei through a national facial recognition system.

These faces on the ground were the best evidence; he could completely switch to another face to live.

Issuing such a warrant was partly hoping for a stroke of luck, better than doing nothing.

However, as he left, looking at the rapidly decomposing, foul-smelling human skin faces on the ground, Yang Jian inexplicably thought of the female ghost master Tong Qian.

That ghost face.

If the ghost controlling Zhao Lei kept collecting other people's faces, was it searching for the androgynous, eerily-smiling Ghost Face behind Tong Qian's head?

If this entity succeeded in obtaining Tong Qian's face, what would happen?

For some reason, thinking about this sent an inexplicable chill through Yang Jian's heart.

But then he felt it was probably just a strange coincidence.

Yet, was this really just a coincidence?

Yang Jian drove on, lost in thought.

Chapter 294 The Final Note

"Something's off."

Yang Jian drove on the road, continuously pondering the conversation he had with Zhao Lei.

Although on the surface, it appeared to be a complete falling out, with intentions of revenge, what was the reality?

Zhao Lei had just deliberately appeared before him, left a few words, and after making the first contact, he left without actual thoughts of dealing with him. Moreover, the last sentence he left behind, "We will meet again, now is not the time," posed some questions.

If Zhao Lei believed it was him who had caused the death of his entire family, and wanted to vent his resentment towards him, there was absolutely no need to confront him face to face.

Moreover, he couldn't be certain whether Zhao Lei was entirely controlled by the ghost after their encounter.

Or was it that Zhao Lei had also mastered some part of it, and that's why he had become the vessel for that ghost?

"The information mentioned a key place, which is where I used to live. Zhao Lei's incident happened there," Yang Jian thought to himself.

Then he contacted Liu Xiaoyu again: "Help me check on Zhao Lei's family's situation again. Are they missing, or did any survive? If they are missing, how many are missing? If any survived, who are they? I need precise information."

"Okay, but right now Dachang City is executing a rescue operation, and many departments are temporarily unable to function, so this might take some time," Liu Xiaoyu said.

Yang Jian said, "Just make sure to get the results, and try to confirm it as fast as possible."

"Don't worry, I will handle it for you," Liu Xiaoyu spoke very seriously.

After the Dachang City incident ended, the attitude of this operator had greatly changed, appearing particularly friendly, completely devoid of the previously somewhat annoying tone.

This made Yang Jian couldn't help but sigh at how good it is to have status and power.

With the purpose of seeking the truth, he once again came to the old residential complex where he used to live.

A few months ago, when he was still studying at No. 7 Middle School, he rented a place here on his own, while his mother had always been working out of town.

Because of the supernatural events that began, the headquarters of the ghost controllers seemed to have specially arranged for his mother to work at a well-known company in J City, using various methods to keep her there.

Though he hadn't contacted her for a while, no news was good news, which meant everything was alright, and Yang Jian didn't need to worry.

These invisible benefits, honestly, were quite useful at times.

After all, J City is now the safest place in the country, without compare.

"Here we are."

Yang Jian arrived at the entrance of the residential complex, his car's alarm beeping, signaling some issue.

No one to be seen.

A deathly silence.

The lighting in the dimly lit stairwells was missing, as if they had been abandoned for several years, and the elderly who used to play cards and dance in the square below were now nowhere to be seen.

Although this old residential complex appeared a bit abnormal, Yang Jian knew that it wasn't the complex that had problems, it was his own home.

With familiarity, he entered one of the residential buildings and went upstairs.

Arriving at the door of his former home, he found that the door was already open. If he wasn't mistaken, it should be because he had left in a hurry and didn't close the door, not that there had been a burglary.

Even if there had been burglars, anyone entering this haunted house would be unlucky.

Returning to the old place, Yang Jian felt both familiar and strange. In just a few months, he had nearly lost recognition of himself, with the changes happening too fast.

He walked in.

It was the familiar layout, only the room was now covered in a lot more dust, and nothing else had changed. Even the dining table next to him still had his unfinished instant noodles and sausages from when he was still in school.

He had left the haunted house in such a hurry that he didn't take anything with him, without a penny to his name, and in the end, he resorted to some disgraceful means to scrape together some money.

Thinking back now, those experiences were indeed quite interesting.

"What's this..."

Yang Jian used the light from his phone to illuminate the living room and discovered there was a pile of torn paper on the floor.

He was certain these weren't left behind after he had used them.

The papers were torn by someone but not severely. Randomly picking up a few pieces and piecing them together, he discovered they had words left by Zhao Lei.

"I'm having problems with my memory, and my situation is dire. I must write some things down with a pen..."

"Yang Jian was right, controlling a malevolent ghost is a nightmarish experience. I regret my previous curiosity. It's now in my mind, and I keep forgetting some very important memories, while some that don't belong to me are surfacing."

"It's gotten dark in Dachang City. I came here to seek help from Yang Jian, but I couldn't find him."

"There is a ghost in this house. When you read this note, run immediately. Leave this place."

"My name is Zhao Lei? Then who is Xu Fan? And who is Zhang Xia? Why do I have memories of several people?"

"Not all ghosts can be controlled. I feel that I can't control that thing. It's taking over me. I think I'm going crazy. Look at the notes, quickly. Remember, you must look at the notes."

"Don't believe what's written in the notes. A ghost made me leave them."

"..."

Yang Jian looked at the notes written by Zhao Lei, piecing together the shredded paper to construct an incomplete story.

Zhao Lei came here alone seeking help, presumably because he saw that the door to his own house was open and entered out of curiosity.

Afterward, he was attacked by a malevolent ghost.

Then the memories in his mind became chaotic, but it seemed that Zhao Lei struggled at some point, as if fighting with the ghost.

But the end result was that Zhao Lei failed to control the ghost. He failed, his memory was completely rewritten, and several different people's memories appeared in his mind. Zhao Lei realized this and tried to remind himself by leaving notes, but another ghost left a message in the notes telling him not to believe these words.

The shattered paper on the ground, the broken pen, and the signs of struggle all indicated a very long and painful time for Zhao Lei.

Struggling to the end, Zhao Lei failed. He lost his own personality, and something else inherited his memory.

"I feel there is no hope left. I'm about to vanish. I don't know how much longer I can stay lucid. I wanted to contact someone named Yang Jian but now I can't even remember who he is. I just know he's important and can help me."

On a piece of paper, Zhao Lei left a message of despair.

Yang Jian fell silent looking at this.

Continuing to pick up scattered papers, he found a repetitive message under a pile of waste paper beneath the sofa.

"Yang Jian, when you read this, you must kill me. Don't think I'm Zhao Lei. I'm no longer myself. It's using my memory to look for you."

"Kill me, whoever it is must kill me. Don't let it succeed."

Many papers bore the plea to end Zhao Lei's life.

But in the deepest part of the pile, he found a special wad of paper that hadn't been torn, as if deliberately hidden there.

"I've discovered one of its abilities. It can alter memories, take them. So, in the last moments of lucidity, I can hypnotize myself and try to implant a false memory for that thing to absorb. I don't know if it will work, but this is my last chance. All I can do is this. Yang Jian, I'm sorry.

I'm too useless and have caused you trouble."

The last of the scattered papers on the floor, written in red ink: Find Yang Jian, take revenge, kill him. I want him to know what he did to me...

"Kill Yang Jian, kill Yang Jian..."

The repetition of these words was filled with animosity and viciousness.

Self-hypnosis seemed effective; the false memories were absorbed. After the disappearance of Zhao Lei's personality, only hatred for Yang Jian remained.

This hatred wasn't really about revenging Yang Jian but rather using this hatred to find him, hoping Yang Jian would solve it before the ghost's purpose was achieved.

It was a ploy of using the ghost's traits to kill indirectly.

Zhao Lei executed it brilliantly.

In a desperate situation, he thought of a way to break the deadlock.

However, Zhao Lei's plan was only partially successful. His self-hypnotic deception worked, but the ghost noticed it.

After all, the ghost had completely absorbed his memory, definitely insight into the plan as well.

That's why Zhao Lei, knowing Yang Jian was formidable, made only brief contact before leaving.

"Damn ghost."

Yang Jian abruptly stood up, an unexpected surge of anger welling up from within after a long silence.

Chapter 295 Another Conversation

At first, Yang Jian assumed Zhao Lei had become a ghost manipulator who merged with a fierce ghost, having his thoughts and will altered. The whole person became extreme, amplifying various negative emotions, which was why he inexplicably set his sights on him.

But now it seems that it's not the case at all.

Zhao Lei had unintentionally encountered a ghost and tried to control it, but ultimately failed. He struggled with all his might but couldn't escape the fate of having his memories rewritten.

While the outcome was the same, the process was not.

"He always wanted to become a ghost manipulator, hoping to be different. He never expected such an outcome," Yang Jian's expression changed uncertainly.

He no longer blamed Zhao Lei for attacking him. As he saw it, this created an opportunity for him to imprison the ghost.

However, he did not seize the opportunity.

No, to be more precise, Yang Jian was restrained by that ghost.

Without the ability to open the Ghost Domain, he couldn't trap Zhao Lei. Failing that, he couldn't keep Zhao Lei around, especially since that thing seemed to have integrated many people's memories by now, turning into a creature with intelligence that knew very well how to avoid him, and even if it did make contact, it would be extremely cautious.

"No, Zhao Lei did serve a purpose. He made me sense that something was wrong and informed me of what happened to him, allowing me to be on guard. This is very important, and it also reminded me that the ghost seems to be up to something terrible," Yang Jian reflected while looking at the notes scattered on the floor.

Zhao Lei was attacked by a fierce ghost, and if he couldn't control the ghost, it didn't make sense for his personality to remain intact for so long.

Or perhaps, there were some changes that he himself was aware of.

Yang Jian thought for a moment but decided not to waste time here. He tidied up, packed the scattered notes into a box, then took some personal items he cared about from home, left a year's rent money, locked the door, and left.

If the landlord was still alive, he should receive this last rent.

He would not return here in the future, even if the place was no longer haunted.

"I'll make a round in Dachang City. Zhao Lei might not have left the city yet. With some luck, I might be able to find him," Yang Jian thought to himself.

Though not very hopeful, he felt it was necessary to try.

Driving with the Ghost Domain activated, Yang Jian's car eerily maneuvered through every corner of the city. At this moment, he felt a sense of duty as a ghost manipulator and began a comprehensive patrol. If there were any supernatural events, he would surely detect them. And even if he didn't find Zhao Lei, confirming the current situation in Dachang City was essential.

"Yang Jian, I've found something," Liu Xiaoyu's voice suddenly came from the satellite-located cellphone.

"What's the situation with Zhao Lei's family?"

Liu Xiaoyu reported, "His parents are still alive; his father is on a business trip out of town, while his mother survived at home. However, several other relatives have gone missing."

In Dachang City, to go missing meant death.

"I understand. Continue the search. Same as before, contact me if there is news," Yang Jian hung up the phone.

Indeed, Zhao Lei's memories had been tampered with. Under these circumstances, whether his parents were alive or not was no longer important. In his current memory, he probably believed that his parents were dead. Even if he saw his parents with his own eyes, he might not recognize them.

By evening,

Yang Jian's search had yielded nothing.

He also confirmed one thing: Dachang City was currently very safe, with not a single paranormal event occurring. As long as no transient populations brought in any paranormal entities, the city of Dachang could now be counted as one of the safest cities in the world, save for some public order issues.

The irony was not lost on him.

A city that had experienced an S-level paranormal event had now become a rare safe zone on earth.

However, outside of Dachang City, Yang Jian found something bizarre.

North on the highway, there appeared a blood-red pond, with vague figures of bodies bobbing and soaking within.

He had checked the data and compared it with the previous incident; he could confirm that the Blood Pool was left after Yan Li's death because he had sped away, heading north, before collapsing and succumbing to the fierce ghost not far from the highway.

After observing it for a while and realizing it seemed tranquilly located in a sparsely populated area, Yang Jian decided against provoking whatever was in that Blood Pool.

With supernatural incidents becoming more frequent in the world, each of his actions should focus on resolving urgent matters. As for mysterious events of low threat, they weren't worth the risk. No one could guarantee the harmlessness of seemingly innocuous entities; a misstep had no recourse.

And based on his understanding of Yan Li's Ghost Blood, it seemed to have the ability to suppress all other ghosts.

Very troublesome.

So I'd rather not get in touch for the time being.

I returned to the Guanjiang Residential Complex.

The place was brightly lit, with nearby construction sites working day and night, rushing to finish the remaining safety measures for the safe house as quickly as possible. Zhang Xianggu was determined to complete it in the shortest time possible.

It's best to be prepared for danger in times of safety, especially after having just gone through such a major event. I could understand the feeling of having survived a close call with death.

"Yang Jian, what happened? I saw your car hood popped open earlier. Were you in an accident?" Zhang Liqin asked as she entered and noticed something was wrong with the car parked outside.

"Just ran into a bit of trouble. If you have nothing else going on, help me piece these scraps of paper together and glue them properly. Don't mix them up, there might still be some information I need in there," Yang Jian said, putting a cardboard box on the coffee table.

I had only taken a preliminary look at Zhao Lei's notes. I wanted to make sure I hadn't missed any clues.

"Leave it to me, she's just a saleswoman, what does she know?"

Jiang Yan said pledging her capability, "I was the second-place winner in puzzle competitions when I was in elementary school."

"What's there to brag about? I even won first place in a children's song contest when I was a kid, did you see me showing off? Want me to sing a couple of lines?" Yang Jian looked at her seriously.

Zhang Liqin said a bit embarrassedly, "I'll go contact the repair shop for you, try to get the car fixed as soon as possible."

Yang Jian nodded, didn't say much, and went straight to the fifth floor.

He picked up a voice recorder pen at his desk on the fifth floor and said, "Today I encountered Zhao Lei. The effectiveness of Ghost Shadow's abilities is not particularly clear."

Although turning one arm of Ghost Shadow into a javelin can take the place of Coffin Nail, it's easy to be fooled by fierce ghosts during an attack, which makes it too risky and likely to fail, so I don't recommend using it, unless it's an emergency."

Covering my body with Ghost Shadow to simulate the effect of a shroud seems to be quite effective, able to withstand the attack of fierce ghosts and ensure my safety during the initial contact.

Ghost Shadow also seems to be able to activate the Ghost Domain, but the range isn't large. I'm not sure if it's because it lacks a head. This is an incomplete Ghost Shadow, and even after being revived, it still has defects.

After recording, Yang Jian put down the pen.

Lately, I've been attempting various experiments, trying to comprehensively develop the abilities of fierce ghosts. There have been many foolish attempts, but also some successful ones.

Because of Zhao Lei's case, I can't get it out of my mind.

In order to eliminate this hidden danger and to avenge Zhao Lei, after much consideration, I decided to take out the box containing the skin paper that was hidden in the wall.

In the face of supernatural events, I dared not to utilize this eerie skin paper.

Back then, I lacked the leverage to negotiate with it, so I could only try to believe in this ghostly thing. The result was that the skin paper successfully devoured a ghost... However, this time with the hanging in front of the Ghost Mirror, since I got the method in advance, the skin paper didn't take advantage.

Yang Jian was gradually getting the hang of it.

To avoid direct contact, he even put on a pair of specially made gloves.

He took out the skin paper again.

He laid it out flat on the table; the dark brown paper was soft yet exuded a chilly feel, with mottled marks making it look very old. At first glance, there was nothing odd about it, but it was actually creepy and terrifying.

At least I considered it the most bizarre thing I'd encountered in all my experiences with supernatural events.

"My name is Yang Jian, and if you're reading this, I'm already dead. Although I was lucky enough to survive the Hungry Ghost incident, I've realized that it was not the end of the nightmare, but the beginning. If you haven't left Dachang City yet, maybe there's still a chance to change everything..."

On the skin paper, words gradually appeared and finally formed a sentence.

"Enough with the nonsense, can't you change your opening lines? Always writing about my death, are you trying to make me feel hopeless so that I would have to listen to you to survive?" Yang Jian said, "I wonder how many people you duped to death before you came across me."

The writing stopped, with no more messages emerging.

"Tell me where Zhao Lei is, and what's the deal with that ghost. I might consider taking the next step in collaboration with you," Yang Jian directly started a negotiation dialogue, of course without any sincerity.

It was all about wheedling information first.

The words on the skin paper quickly began to disappear as if they were being rapidly erased, then it returned to calm once more.

It seemed to be ignoring Yang Jian, the big swindler.

"Quite proud, aren't you?" Yang Jian said, "If you're so dignified, how about I send you a thousand meters underground? Don't even think about seeing the light of day again for a thousand years, let alone ten thousand."

This skin paper had one major flaw: it could only display information. For anything else, it had to rely on someone else to act.

It was somewhat similar to the ghost that Zhao Kaiming had dealt with.

Only Zhao Kaiming's start was too bad. His whole family died, and the ghost caught his fatal weakness, leaving him no choice but to walk down a dark path, and in the end, somehow, he swallowed a gun and committed suicide. If it had been a better start, with Zhao Kaiming's abilities, the outcome wouldn't have been what it was.