

Revival 336

Chapter 336 - 335 Black Candle Flame

At this very moment.

Yang Jian was standing in front of a dining table.

A pristine white tablecloth was spread on top of it, at the center of which sat a vase with a single white rose that was vibrant and fragrant, as if it had been freshly bought from a flower shop that morning, in stark contrast to the wilted flowers on the other tables.

Next to the dining table, there was a white porcelain plate with a set of knife and fork beside it. Inside the plate, shockingly, lay a human face.

Traces of fear and despair could be faintly seen on the face.

Yang Jian glanced at the knife and fork next to it, stained with blood, as if the face had been crudely carved from someone's head with this very set, no, not as if, that was in fact what had happened.

He even saw the blood that had seeped from beneath the facial skin pooling under the plate, emitting a faint wisp of steam.

Everything indicated that a terrifying event had recently taken place here.

However, for Yang Jian, this was neither a small nor a large blow.

"No, it can't be, from the moment I used the Ghost Domain to the end, it definitely didn't take more than a second. If there had been a ghost here just now, with my abilities I could have intercepted it before it escaped, so why did it still manage to flee?"

Yang Jian looked toward the chair next to the dining table that had been used.

He couldn't understand how his actions, which had been so swift, could still have led to this outcome.

"It's a failure, I told you to let me handle it, but you wouldn't listen," Xiong Wenwen said, seeing Yang Jian standing there, frowning in thought, and she pouted, "If I had had a premonition about that ghost, it would have been toast."

"Even with your premonition, it would have made no difference, the one in action was me. This thing could disappear in the instant I made my move; there must be some other reason, it can't be that I did something wrong."

Yang Jian replied, glancing at her. He had indeed given his all, attacking with the ferocity of a lion pouncing on a rabbit.

"However, ghosts are different from one another; at least so far, I've never encountered two that were the same. To deal with this thing, we need to keep interacting with it, until finally we understand its

abilities, patterns of action, and methods of killing... I originally wanted to bypass all these factors and seize it directly, but it seems I was a bit too naïve."

"But at least I can be certain of one thing: this ghost definitely has no physical form, it may well be a purely mental existence."

Yang Jian made a bold conjecture.

If this ghost was indeed the one with a newspaper capable of altering memories, then if he thought about it more carefully, had Yang Jian ever seen the ghost's true form since he encountered it?

The answer was no.

He, too, had been attacked by that ghost, but the first time it appeared it did so in the guise of Yang Jian's deceased father, and the second time it masqueraded as Zhao Lei.

In other words, the ghost had no identity of its own.

No identity meant non-existence.

Non-existence could imply a purely mental presence.

Hence, Yang Jian had a feeling that the memory-altering ghost might not be as straightforward as one might think. If Zhao Lei were still alive, he would surely know more, but unfortunately, he was dead. However, his urgent wish before dying for Yang Jian to quickly deal with that apparition had to have been for a reason.

It was just that he couldn't comprehend Zhao Lei's sense of urgency at the time.

"Since the action failed, perhaps we should just leave for now," suggested Xiong Wenwen, involuntarily moving closer to Yang Jian, her large eyes scanning nervously from side to side, "Staying here, don't you feel afraid?"

Fearing that someone might suddenly appear from some dark place.

"Actions must be taken step by step, I had already devised two plans before, one was to act unconventionally and directly use all means to forcibly detain the ghost, which would avoid meaningless collisions and consumption, since you can foresee the future and I have the means, but now this plan has been obstructed, however, I still don't plan to give up and have decided to give it another try." Yang Jian turned around, took out a body bag, and then heavily placed it on a nearby dining table.

He opened the bag and took out a candle from inside.

"Is this a Ghost Candle?" Xiong Wenwen recognized the item.

Yang Jian tore off the layer of gold foil wrapping the Ghost Candle, preparing to light it when Xiong Wenwen suddenly jumped in fright, "Damn it, Yang Jian, are you crazy? That's a white Ghost Candle, it will attract the ghosts over."

Lighting a red Ghost Candle can prevent a person from being killed by a ghost, but a white Ghost Candle has the opposite function and can lure ghosts out.

"No, no, you can't light it, that's practically seeking death, I don't want to seek death with you."

Xiong Wenwen's face turned pale as he grabbed Yang Jian's hand to stop him from lighting the candle.

"You also said before, there's more than one ghost here, if you draw out all the ghosts of this hotel and you can't withstand them, won't you be endangering me? I am still a child, you can't harm me like this."

"Of course, I understand, but this is the most direct method, isn't it?" Yang Jian wasn't angered by his interference, but spoke very seriously, "Drawing out that ghost and taking the initiative to attack increases our chances of success. If we play hide and seek with several ghosts in this hotel, it's very likely we will end up like Tong Qian."

"This hotel is definitely not as simple as it seems, Zhao Lei chose this place for a reason and not anywhere else."

"You said it yourself, this hotel is not simple, so you must be more careful. Even if you want to light it, don't do it now. Who goes all out at the start of the game? If the ghost you're looking for doesn't appear, and instead something else does, we will die."

Xiong Wenwen desperately didn't want Yang Jian to light the white Ghost Candle.

Because he had learned his lesson about this in the past.

He thought he was only luring out a ghost, but as a result, he summoned some unexpected horror.

That time, Xiong Wenwen survived thanks to his precognition, but everyone else fell victim.

Yang Jian's eyes flickered with hesitation; he certainly understood that what Xiong Wenwen said made sense.

The horror of the hotel was not limited to one place, and he was also worried that lighting this white Ghost Candle would serve as a signal to bring out all the ghosts, in which case it would no longer be about detaining a ghost but rather about sending themselves to death.

There were risks, but if successful, this could quickly resolve the incident, after all, high risk, high reward.

"One minute, no, just thirty seconds, I need to confirm whether that ghost is still nearby. If it is and we leave, we might inadvertently let the ghost escape."

Yang Jian decided to make one more attempt.

He didn't quite believe that his actions had had no effect at all.

The Ghost Domain was still present, and the ghost might still be lingering nearby, or might even be right beside him.

And the human face on this plate also proved that what they encountered was greatly related to the one that tampered with Zhao Lei.

Ignoring Xiong Wenwen's fear, Yang Jian took out a lighter and resolutely lit the white Ghost Candle.

Unlike the red Ghost Candle, which emits an eerie green flame, the light from the white candle was black.

This black candlelight was even more bizarre than the green one. Merely lighting it caused the nearby Ghost Domain to be eroded, covered by a layer of darkness that resembled smog or a bottomless abyss, seemingly cutting off all interference from the outside world and connecting to some incomprehensible, strange place.

Chapter 337 - 336: The Smiling Corpse

Yang Jian lit the Ghost Candle, and the white Ghost Candle burst into black flames, casting a dark light. The Ghost Domain, originally shrouded in red light, now seemed to be eroded by darkness, evoking an indescribable feeling within.

As if ghosts in unrest, a nameless dread stirred from nowhere.

It seemed that if the Ghost Candle were to keep burning, something terrifying would happen.

The white Ghost Candle was, in fact, a defective product derived from the red Ghost Candle.

Its characteristic of attracting fierce ghosts, though unique in a sense, was also quite terrifying, especially when lit in such a haunted place; no one could be certain what it would draw forth.

Luckily, it might attract the ghost controlling Zhao Lei.

If unlucky, it could bring forth an unknown terror, and this fear might not be singular.

"It's been ten seconds; you'd better not trick me. The candle must be extinguished within thirty seconds," Xiong Wenwen said nervously, watching her cartoon watch closely.

Yang Jian's expression was grave, his body tense. He did not respond to Xiong Wenwen, as he needed to concentrate and be alert to any slight movement around him.

Thirty seconds was not a long time; on the contrary, it was very brief, but at that moment it seemed to slow down immensely, the brewing atmosphere so oppressive it was suffocating.

Only fifteen seconds had passed.

Suddenly, the sound of footsteps echoed from the hallway outside the restaurant. The footsteps were heavy, seeming to bear the weight of an entire body, and eerily devoid of echo. Moreover, they appeared abruptly, not approaching gradually from afar but as if appearing out of thin air.

Xiong Wenwen's eyes widened, and she instantly turned to look towards the back door.

Undoubtedly, the heavy footsteps from the hallway were heading this way.

The Ghost Candle was having an effect; a ghost hidden in the hotel was being drawn here.

In just about five seconds, the footsteps suddenly stopped. Through the dim restaurant door, a tall, dark silhouette could vaguely be seen standing behind the hazy glass door.

The dark candlelight flickered.

It was unclear whether it was the shadows of Yang Jian and Xiong Wenwen, or if someone unknown really stood behind that door.

"Yang Jian," Xiong Wenwen screamed in fear, instinctively wanting to use her ghostly abilities to foresee the imminent terror.

"Hold steady, don't panic. I'm here; nothing will happen. You're in my Ghost Domain now, not just anything can walk in here casually," Yang Jian reassured without turning around, even though his Eye of the Ghost had already seen the tall, dark figure standing outside the door.

The two were less than ten meters apart, with only a sliding door, unlocked, between them.

Without a doubt, this was a ghost attracted by the Ghost Candle.

But his intuition told him that this was not their target for the trip, for the ghost that manipulated faces was inside the restaurant, while the ghost outside was outside the restaurant—it was very likely not the same ghost.

Therefore, Yang Jian did not extinguish the Ghost Candle; he was still waiting.

Twenty-five seconds elapsed.

At that moment, in the otherwise empty restaurant, a chair eerily moved back several centimeters.

The chair scraping against the floor tiles emitted a sharp noise.

Yang Jian quickly looked towards the sound.

It was the dining table that had been used before. Previously, the table was empty, with only one vacant chair. But now, it was this chair that had moved, and someone was sitting on it, someone whose face could not be seen.

Yes, a person.

Dressed in leather shoes and a business suit, yet his face was obscured—not because Yang Jian’s ghostly vision failed, but because the man held a newspaper in front of his face, blocking it from view.

That posture... no mistake about it, he was the target they were seeking.

Yang Jian’s eyes narrowed sharply, wanting to release the suppression of the Ghost Rope and directly use its restorative property to deal with the ghost.

However, before he could act, the movement behind him caused him to break out in a cold sweat.

In the entire restaurant, each table’s chair moved backward in unison.

The next moment, people suddenly appeared in all those chairs that had made a noise, with varied attires and genders, but their movements were eerily synchronized: stiff arms lifted, each reading a newspaper, and by a sweep of the ghostly vision at the back of his head, there were at least twenty to thirty people.

"Creak..."

At that moment, the tall figure outside, seemingly drawn by the Ghost Candle, seemed ready to come in, and the sliding door was slowly being pushed open.

Meanwhile, the Ghost Candle had burned for forty seconds, exceeding the thirty-second limit Yang Jian had set.

If things were to continue, within a minute, Yang Jian and Xiong Wenwen would face an unimaginable ghostly attack.

"Fight or retreat?"

Yang Jian's forehead broke out in a cold sweat as he faced two pressing choices.

He could either take a chance here with Xiong Wenwen, and if they could hold on, there might be an opportunity to directly imprison the ghosts in this place. But they might also fall into a deadly trap set by the malevolent spirits due to his rash actions, and die right there and then.

The hotel harbored some kind of strangeness that was beyond his understanding, and Yang Jian didn't know if it might be a potential and significant hidden danger.

"Let's fight."

After a moment of contemplation, Yang Jian made a rather insane decision.

He decided to confront it head on.

Considering that he still had a red Ghost Candle in hand, which could ensure his safety, he had the resources to take a chance.

Yang Jian thereupon blew out the white Ghost Candle. As the black candlelight extinguished, everything around became even clearer.

But then, he untied an old grass rope that had been wound around his hand.

The Ghost Rope, usually kept in check by the Ghost Shadow, would immediately turn into a reviving ghost once released, starting a killing spree with no discrimination — its influence could encompass several streets, or even entire districts.

That's why every time he used it, Yang Jian had to confine the revived Ghost Rope within a certain range using the Ghost Domain to maintain a controllable situation.

Once a fierce ghost had its controllability established, it would turn into an unconventional weapon for Yang Jian.

"You're actually carrying a ghost with you?" Xiong Wenwen immediately guessed upon seeing the rope and took two steps back in fright.

Yang Jian grabbed him, preventing him from moving about aimlessly, "I know what I'm doing. Stay put."

Xiong Wenwen struggled, but how could the strength of a child compare to Yang Jian who had harnessed the power of a Ghost Shadow?

Although he was using the Ghost Rope, Yang Jian didn't plan to rely on it solely to solve the problem at hand. He just hoped the Ghost Rope would take care of what it could, containing all potential dangers so he could focus on those horrors that the Ghost Rope couldn't handle.

After the revival of the Ghost Rope, countless old grass ropes immediately hung down in the entire dining room.

These ropes had nooses at the ends, as if specifically designed for hanging people.

Having faced revived Ghost Ropes before, Yang Jian, with his Ghost Eyes, could completely suppress them, and there would be no problem even in protecting Xiong Wenwen.

However, it was a different story for the other so-called people in the restaurant.

The Ghost Ropes landed on them as if controlled by someone, looping directly around their necks and then hoisting them up without any suspense.

Each person hoisted aloft had their head and limbs dangling limply, their bodies stiff without any struggle — clearly, these weren't living people but corpses, for only corpses wouldn't have to worry about being hung by the Ghost Rope.

Yet, after hoisting these twenty-plus corpses, and as their newspapers dropped from their hands, the dim light of the dining room, reflected against the red light of the Ghost Domain, revealed their faces.

All those pallid dead faces bore a creepy smile that was both familiar and unsettling.

And whether these people were truly dead was uncertain, for as they were hanging, all their eyeballs simultaneously turned to focus on Yang Jian.

They revealed a bizarre smile and fixed their gaze collectively upon him — this scene sent a chilling terror through his bones, overwhelming him with a sense of extreme and imminent threat.

Because that bizarre smile was all too familiar to Yang Jian... it belonged to Ghost Face from behind Tong Qian.

But the concern was that Tong Qian had been out of contact for several days, and the ghost capable of stealing faces and tampering with memories had also manipulated Zhao Lei into entering this hotel.

Linking the two pieces of information.

The worst scenario unfolded.

"Xiong Wenwen, use your ability to foresee the future," Yang Jian urgently commanded.

"Now you say it. I thought you weren't afraid to die," Xiong Wenwen muttered in complaint, already trembling with fear — had it not been for Yang Jian's restraint, he would have used the power of the ghost at the sound of cutlery clinking against porcelain.

As Yang Jian spoke, Xiong Wenwen's face gradually turned pale, the breath of life within him began to fade, and he seemed to be transforming into a ghost.

He still made use of his ability.

Because Yang Jian realized that the preemptive attack had failed.

The ghost had acquired Tong Qian's smiling face, elevating its Terror Level to at least that of the Crying Tomb Ghost — this was an A-level supernatural event, and more complex than ordinary A-level events, because he was about to confront an amalgamation of malevolent spirits.

Even the protagonist of the Human Head Balloon incident was still in this hotel.

As soon as Yang Jian finished speaking.

A cold wind whistled through the dining room, stirring the newspapers that had fallen from the hands of the corpses. Each paper was bloodstained, with the outline of a face on one side. Accompanied by the bloodied papers sweeping over, all the corpses hung by the Ghost Rope split their mouths open at that moment.

"Keh, kehkeh~!"

All the hung corpses stared at Yang Jian, issuing laughter like that of Ghost Face.

Chapter 338 - 337 Deterioration Halted

In the dimly lit restaurant, bodies that had long since perished were suspended in mid-air by old, worn straw ropes. Each corpse bore a sinister smile, and their ashen eyes were wide open, uniformly focusing on Yang Jian and Xiong Wenwen's direction, emitting a creepy, strange laughter.

From his initial encounter with Tong Qian, it was known that this kind of Ghost Face-like laughter was lethal: Ordinary people who heard it needed only a few seconds to die with a smiling face.

Perhaps even a ghost manipulator could not withstand the curse of such laughter.

It was just like the wailing of the Crying Tomb Ghost.

To avoid being killed by this cursed laughter, the only option was to completely block one's ears, better yet to become deaf. As long as not the slightest sound could be heard, then you would be safe.

The moment Yang Jian heard this laughter inside the Ghost Domain, he knew things were not good.

Having had an encounter with the Crying Tomb Ghost, he knew that the Ghost Domain could not block out this kind of sound, it could only temporarily delay the time before the laughter killed you.

"All the corpses are laughing, but it's absolutely impossible for every single one to have a Ghost Face. Only one corpse's smiling face can truly kill, the rest are just deliberate coverups. I'll activate the third level of the Ghost Domain to buy time. Within this period, you must find the corpse with the real Ghost Face, otherwise, we can only run."

Yang Jian clenched his teeth, placing his hands before the Ghost Eyes, and from the palm of each hand, a slit opened, and eyes emerged.

The third layer of the Ghost Domain was activated.

This time he was conservative, not expanding the area too much, just covering the restaurant, which would temporarily isolate the ghost outside from entering.

Without reason, that ghost in the corridor outside should not be able to come in when one is within the third layer of the Ghost Domain.

"So many corpses, it's going to be troublesome to search. We might as well run. Your third layer Ghost Domain is useless; it's being suppressed and is about to be invaded."

Xiong Wenwen was so scared that he was nearly crying, having just witnessed a very horrifying scene.

"What?" Yang Jian had just activated the third layer of the Ghost Domain when he heard this news, his eyelid involuntarily twitched.

The third layer of the Ghost Domain had been invaded?

"This is impossible. Even a Hungry Ghost can be locked down by my third layer Ghost Domain. The Terror Level of the ghosts here definitely can't reach S-class, otherwise, the Ghost Rope couldn't have lifted all the bodies so effortlessly... wait." Yang Jian was initially disbelieving, but then he suddenly remembered the ghost that could alter memories.

The bloodstained red newspaper.

That thing could counter his Ghost Domain, completely suppressing it.

Since the newspaper could obstruct vision, and the Ghost Eyes' sight was blocked, the Ghost Domain couldn't be used smoothly.

"How much time do I have left?" Yang Jian immediately asked.

"Only, only three seconds." Xiong Wenwen looked at the cartoon watch in his hand and stammered.

No sooner had he finished speaking.

A bloodstained red newspaper appeared out of place in Yang Jian's Ghost Domain. The paper bore the outline of a human face, with a terrifying malevolence. With the appearance of this thing, a cold breeze seemed to blow into the Ghost Domain, and wherever the bloodstained newspaper flew, the red Ghost Domain faded away as if it was being smeared out, revealing a corner of the gloomy restaurant.

As this gap was torn open, more places saw the bloodstained red newspapers blown into the Ghost Domain, creating more and more tears.

In just a moment, Yang Jian's Ghost Domain appeared as if it would be completely torn apart.

"I'll act, you choose, tell me the result at the fastest speed."

Yang Jian's face dramatically changed, and immediately, he disappeared with Xiong Wenwen from the spot. He materialized under a smiling corpse that was emitting laughter.

The next moment, his Ghost Shadow stood up behind him, ready to invade the corpse to seize the Ghost Face and stop this terrifying incident from continuing.

"No, not this corpse. I saw you successfully suppress this one, but the laughter is still going on," Xiong Wenwen hurriedly shouted.

It was clear that he was using his predictive ability to inform Yang Jian of the result.

Yang Jian halted his action, quickly moving to the next corpse, ready to act again.

"Not this one either," Xiong Wenwen told him again.

"Damn it."

Yang Jian cursed silently, already breaking out in a cold sweat; his Ghost Domain was being invaded while outside the laughter of ghosts continued incessantly. Once it reached its limit, he would have to retreat.

This operation could only end in failure.

But he didn't give up hope. Since he had chosen to face the challenge head-on, he wouldn't easily back down; otherwise, hesitating would only waste his power.

It wasn't easy for a Ghost Controller to take action even once; the cost was too high.

The fourth body, no.

The fifth body, also no.

Yang Jian's luck clearly wasn't great. In front of nearly thirty bodies, after making five or six choices, the odds of success were only about one in six.

But now, the limit had been reached.

The conditions didn't allow him to continue with trial and error, because his Ghost Domain was already on the verge of collapse.

Around him, the red Ghost Domain was no longer visible—only a dimly lit restaurant surrounded by cold winds blowing in all directions, with bloodstained newspapers emblazoned with human faces swirling around, closing within a one-meter radius of Yang Jian, many of the papers almost pasting themselves onto his face.

Once stuck on, Yang Jian couldn't be sure he could hold on any longer.

This wasn't like the time he was attacked at home and could leave whenever he wanted—here, other horrors existed. A moment's error could very likely result in his death.

"We can't keep trying, run for it! The ghost from outside the door has already come in, it's right in this restaurant. Once the Ghost Domain is gone, we'll be killed instantly. I've foreseen this outcome," Xiong Wenwen was screaming on the verge of collapse, having predicted his and Yang Jian's death for the first time.

He had not seen this outcome before.

In other words, this operation had to stop here. Continuing to struggle arbitrarily would lead to the scenario Xiong Wenwen had foreseen.

So a change had to be made.

Yang Jian gritted his teeth and had no choice but to give up. He immediately withdrew the Ghost Domain and took out a red Ghost Candle.

The moment the Ghost Domain was withdrawn, the bloodstained red newspapers surged towards him.

At the same time, the sound of heavy footsteps in the restaurant quickly approached. It was the same ghost that had appeared outside the corridor previously and had, during Yang Jian's operation, already entered the restaurant and was now lurking nearby.

This thing wasn't deliberately targeting Yang Jian; it was an unknown horror attracted by the white Ghost Candle he had used earlier.

The death Xiong Wenwen had foreseen was due to this ghost.

Beyond that ghost, the eerie laughter echoing inside the restaurant was even more chilling. The laugh carried a curse akin to that of an Evil Ghost, and in just a moment, Xiong Wenwen's mouth began to curl up involuntarily into a smile that was gradually mirroring those on the corpses.

"We're definitely dead this time, definitely dead. Yang Jian, can you hurry up?"

Xiong Wenwen started to cry, realizing he had foreseen several outcomes, all of them death.

If not dying with a smile, then being killed by the ghost that entered the restaurant, or by the resurrection of a fierce ghost... The only way out he could foresee was two.

One of them was lighting the Ghost Candle.

Yang Jian timed it precisely.

In this moment of crisis, a light flared up.

In his hand, he held a red candle with a sinister green flame burning on it, illuminating the surrounding darkness.

The Ghost Candle was successfully lit.

As soon as the Ghost Candle's light appeared, the situation around them instantly changed.

The bloodstained newspapers blown by the cold wind at that moment could no longer approach the area covered by the candle's light, swirling chaotically in the dim restaurant, unable to attack Yang Jian.

The strange and terrifying laughter was also cut off at that moment, and Yang Jian and Xiong Wenwen, bathed in the candlelight, seemed to become deaf, no longer able to hear that sound.

The worsening situation was halted at that moment.

Even the restaurant's doors were suddenly pulled open then, and a tall dark figure could be seen taking heavy steps, slowly beginning to turn and leave. It seemed to have given up on lingering to attack Yang Jian and Xiong Wenwen, or perhaps this ghost didn't satisfy the conditions to kill them, having previously been forcibly attracted by the white Ghost Candle.

Chapter 339 - 338: The Ghost on the Second Floor

"Follow me, let's get out of here."

Yang Jian lit the Ghost Candle, temporarily dispelling the surrounding eeriness, and he couldn't help but breathe a sigh of relief at that moment.

Without thinking further, he immediately attempted to leave the restaurant with Xiong Wenwen.

This operation had already failed, and continuing to stay here would be extremely dangerous, so a retreat was necessary.

The Ghost Candle was burning violently at the moment, its sinister green flame flickering uneasily. The corpses hanging midair still looked at them with smiling faces, emitting creepy laughter.

Without the barrier of the Ghost Domain, even the current Yang Jian couldn't directly face such supernatural entities, and had to rely on the light of the Ghost Candle to ensure his own safety.

"The burning speed is a bit fast... and it seems to be increasing over time, indicating that the surroundings are becoming more and more dangerous," he mused.

Yang Jian looked at the brand-new Ghost Candle in his hand, his expression darkening slightly.

"You should have left earlier, I almost got killed because of you," Xiong Wenwen complained fearfully, gripping Yang Jian's arm tightly.

But Yang Jian didn't feel the slightest bit embarrassed. He said, "Dealing with supernatural events always involves risks. If I had succeeded just now, I could have dealt with a ghost that posed a potentially huge threat right away. Risk and reward are proportional. I did what I could; it's just bad luck, that's all."

"Besides, your ability to foresee the future seems to have some issues. You can only predict the outcome when I'm in action; you cannot skip this step and see the end result directly. Otherwise, I wouldn't have spent those extra seconds trying."

Xiong Wenwen argued, "Do you think predicting the future is that easy? Actions and locations of ghosts are the most obscure to foresee. It requires intense focus, and there's more than one ghost here. What do you expect me to do?"

"I'm not blaming you, I just didn't understand your abilities well enough, which led to miscalculations in my actions."

Yang Jian didn't blame the child, but acknowledged his own mistakes.

He hadn't expected that Tong Qian's smiling face snatched from behind her head, combined with the memory-altering ghost and some unknown entity within the hotel would introduce so many variables.

If it were one-on-one, Yang Jian would definitely have been able to handle the situation.

"Then why haven't you left yet? What are you wandering around here for?" Xiong Wenwen saw Yang Jian strolling around the restaurant with the Ghost Candle and urged him to leave quickly.

Seeing the rows of corpses hanging in midair, each with a bizarre smile, looking straight at her, and those pairs of dim, lifeless eyes following their movements, Xiong Wenwen was terrified to the point of almost crying.

If the Ghost Candle went out, she would die here.

"I need to retrieve the Ghost Rope. We can't just ignore this ghost; otherwise, the trouble will only grow," Yang Jian spoke softly.

Without his Ghost Domain, the Ghost Rope was out of control. Fortunately, the restaurant wasn't large. As long as he found the source of the Ghost Rope, he could still retrieve it within a short time; this wasn't difficult for him.

If left unchecked, the Ghost Rope could cause a disaster; that too wasn't to be taken lightly.

Soon enough.

Yang Jian saw a strand of Ghost Rope on one of the corpses.

One end of this Ghost Candle was wrapped around a piece of Gold, which stood out especially in the dim surroundings.

This marked Ghost Rope was the source.

"Found it." Yang Jian stepped directly onto the dining table, grabbed the straw rope, and pulled forcefully, taking the rope back.

Once the Ghost Rope was retrieved and suppressed by the Ghost Candle, it immediately lost that eerie power.

All the corpses hanging in the restaurant fell to the ground simultaneously.

The restaurant was a mess, the bodies emitting a faint stench of decay that was almost enough to make one vomit.

Even without the Ghost Rope's power, the corpses still emitted strange laughter, as if they were reluctant to let Yang Jian leave easily, wanting him to join their number.

The chilling wind was still howling, seemingly coming from nowhere, whipping the bloodstained newspapers on the floor into the air and blowing them around Yang Jian.

"We're good now, let's go."

After retrieving the Ghost Rope, Yang Jian immediately left the restaurant.

However, at that moment, Xiong Wenwen pointed to the floor and said, "Look down."

Yang Jian looked down and only then did he notice a series of dense, black footprints on the carpet of the restaurant. These footprints were disorderly, like someone had wandered aimlessly around the place for several laps, especially near where they had been standing—there, the footprints were particularly concentrated.

It seemed as though someone had been waiting right there for Yang Jian and Xiong Wenwen to emerge from the Ghost Domain.

"It's the ghost from the second floor of the hotel; it seems to have entered from outside and hadn't left the second floor since. It was probably distracted by the Ghost Candle earlier and has now left.

Fortunately, we were inside the Ghost Domain, so the ghost couldn't find us, or we would've had to face another unknown terror," said Yang Jian, observing the black footprints covering the floor and discovering a set that led out of the restaurant.

The footsteps from before were no longer audible.

"Now's not the time to deal with this thing. We need to temporarily retreat and rethink our strategy. The best course of action is to find Tong Qian and verify whether she's truly dead. If she is, we have to retrieve any voice recordings left on her satellite-positioned phone."

Yang Jian led Xiong Wenwen out of the restaurant, safely and without incident.

The corpses did not chase after them.

The Ghost Candle kept the terror at bay and suppressed it; within the candlelight, he and Xiong Wenwen were absolutely safe.

Once they left the restaurant, indeed, the flame of the Ghost Candle began to burn at a slower rate.

This proved that they were moving away from danger.

"Let's head back to the lobby first," said Yang Jian.

Yang Jian did not extinguish the Ghost Candle; instead, he still held onto it as they walked through the dimly lit corridor.

That series of black footprints seemed to have passed through here as well, extending to the end of the corridor where they disappeared at the intersection.

Yes.

The footprints just vanished, mysteriously disappearing.

It was uncertain whether they moved to the third floor, remained on the second floor, or perhaps descended back to the lobby on the first floor, or were even lurking nearby.

"Where did that thing go?" asked Xiong Wenwen fearfully. He did not use his power and had no idea about the ghost's location.

"Since the Ghost Candle isn't reacting, at least it's not nearby. We can only guess that the thing is wandering on the second floor. But it's an unknown ghost and not my main target this time. Don't focus on it for now, unless it shows itself," Yang Jian replied.

Yang Jian glanced around and ignored it, heading toward the direction of the lobby.

There were too many bizarre things around; he decided to let this one go and not to actively target it.

Soon.

He and Xiong Wenwen returned to the lobby.

This area seemed safe, and no strange things followed them; the Ghost Candle's flame had slowed to its least rapid pace.

It was then that Yang Jian decided to blow out the Ghost Candle.

The eerie green flame went out.

Looking back at the dim corridor, nothing came out, and that creeping laughter had disappeared as well.

It appeared the first skirmish between Yang Jian and the ghost had ended there.

Neither could do much about the other at the moment.

But Yang Jian knew he was at a disadvantage this time because he was facing a ghost, and he was human. Any encounter that wasn't successful was a failure since he couldn't afford multiple probings.

He momentarily set aside all such thoughts.

"Where are Feng Quan and Guo Fan?" he asked.

He scanned the lobby, only to find that the two who had been arguing incessantly with a female receptionist were now nowhere to be seen.

He walked down the stairs to take a closer look.

Yang Jian's face darkened.

They were indeed not in the lobby.

He then looked over at the reception desk.

The female receptionist was still standing there motionless, her expression identical to before, wearing a smile, albeit a slightly stiff one.

"They must have run off after hearing the commotion," Xiong Wenwen said, annoyed. "Here we are, fighting for our lives, and they're selling us out."

"It's not possible they ran off," said Yang Jian, who knew Feng Quan well.

An ambitious man, he would never leave Z City with his tail between his legs.

The only possibilities were two: either they had ventured deeper into the hotel to investigate, or they had encountered danger and gotten caught up in some horrific incident.

Yang Jian's judgment leaned towards the former.

The two must have gone to explore deeper into the hotel.

The elevator had signs of use; it had originally been stopped at the first floor but was now at the fourth.

This meant that Feng Quan and Guo Fan likely went to the fourth floor of the hotel.

Chapter 340: Confirmed Identity

"What should we do now?"

Xiong Wenwen stood somewhat anxiously in the lobby, her gaze drifting unintentionally toward the smiling woman at the front desk.

Why is this person still here?

Hadn't Guo Fan been making a fuss about dealing with her earlier? Now both of them are out of sight, yet this female receptionist is still here, and she keeps smiling at us, a smile that chills the heart a bit.

Yang Jian glanced at the woman at the front desk but didn't pay much attention; instead, he said, "Let's rest a bit and come up with a new plan. Forcing our way through seems futile. We need to find another angle."

"As I said earlier, we need to confirm Tong Qian's condition first. If she's dead, we have to find her phone. Given her personality, it's unlikely she didn't leave behind some message. If all else fails, I have another course of action."

At this point, he paused.

Another course of action for Yang Jian would mean he had to try his luck in either room 13 or room 31.

He hadn't initially planned on investigating personally, but the clues from Zhao Lei's final notes and those from the Ghost Cabinet were so contradictory that they gave him pause.

"However, this operation wasn't entirely fruitless; at least two facts are certain. There are ghosts on the second floor of this hotel, and the one controlling Zhao Lei has indeed checked into this hotel, and what's more, has procured Tong Qian's Ghost Face... And that ghost seems to have grown a lot, my 'Ghost Domain' was completely suppressed."

“If we are to devise a containment plan, we can’t rely on ‘Ghost Domain’ anymore. We have to avoid such suppression scenarios.”

“Also, the white Ghost Candles can’t be used lightly anymore, or else we’ll end up in an uncontrollable situation.”

Xiong Wenwen looked at Yang Jian with some surprise, seemingly not expecting him to think through so many issues in the face of failure, instead of being terrified to the point of crying like her.

Indeed, he is an adult.

Yang Jian didn’t pay any attention to the youngster at the moment but took out his phone to locate Tong Qian’s position by himself.

If Tong Qian were dead, at least her body would still be there. Ghosts won’t clean up the dead body for you. Even if the body couldn’t be found, the phone should be.

As soon as he turned on the satellite positioning on his phone, Yang Jian immediately saw three signal sources appear on a 3D radar map.

This indicated that there were three satellite phones specially used by the international police in his vicinity.

Two of the signals were very close together, showing they were right above him.

It appears those must be Guo Fan's and Feng Quan's phones. As Yang Jian had previously speculated, they indeed went up to the fourth floor of the hotel to investigate and are likely not dead. After all, both of them are capable of controlling two ghosts each. Being top-notch at headquarters and experienced in resolving supernatural events, they wouldn't go down so easily.

The third signal source caused Yang Jian's expression to tighten.

This signal was also very close, so close it was practically right beside him.

Less than ten meters away.

But Yang Jian was currently in the lobby. There was nothing nearby, and the spacious lobby, if measured, was roughly ten meters across.

In other words, Tong Qian's satellite positioning phone was right in this lobby.

Realizing this, Yang Jian followed the direction of the signal, his gaze suddenly fixed on the woman at the front desk with the smile still on her face.

There was seemingly no issue anywhere else in the lobby, only with this counter and this female receptionist.

This problem was obvious, something anyone would notice upon entering.

“Call Tong Qian’s phone for me,” Yang Jian said to his satellite positioning phone.

Ever since he entered this place, his satellite positioning phone had been on twenty-four hours a day.

At this moment, the operator in charge was Liu Xiaoyu. She said, “According to the information here, Tong Qian from Zhongshan City is in a state of disconnection. We can’t get through to her satellite positioning device, and the last known location is inside the Caesar Hotel in Zhongshan City. Are you sure you want to try calling now?”

“Do as I say,” Yang Jian immediately responded.

“Okay,” Liu Xiaoyu replied gravely, for she knew that Yang Jian was once again in the midst of a paranormal event, putting himself in great danger.

If it weren’t necessary, she wouldn’t interfere with any of Yang Jian’s actions.

But at Yang Jian’s request, she notified Tong Qian’s operator and chose to attempt reconnecting the call.

“The call is through,” Liu Xiaoyu immediately said.

Yang Jian frowned, “There’s no tone when the call connects? I need to pinpoint the exact location of the call. Positioning can only give me an approximation.”

“There’s no connection tone because of security considerations, but I can play some sound here in the communications room that will come through on that side’s phone. That could act as a connection tone,” Liu Xiaoyu suggested.

“Good, start now,” Yang Jian instructed.

Liu Xiaoyu instantly contacted Tong Qian’s operator, preparing to play a piece of music.

“Little bunny, be good, open the door...” A cartoon tune began to play.

The sound didn’t come from Yang Jian’s phone, but suddenly started playing in the hotel lobby.

Although the sound was faint, Yang Jian and Xiong Wenwen kept quiet, and the surrounding silence was almost terrifying, so they could hear it fairly clearly.

And the source of this sound was... coming from the body of the female receptionist.

“How did Tong Qian’s phone end up on this thing?” Xiong Wenwen exclaimed, instinctively hiding behind Yang Jian.

He suspected that after Tong Qian was killed by a ghost, the ghost took possession of her phone.

That is to say, this female receptionist was also a ghost.

Yang Jian squinted his eyes, staring intently at the female receptionist.

She still had a smile on her face, standing there like a corpse with no other expression.

“You ask why Tong Qian’s phone is on this female receptionist. That’s because this female receptionist is Tong Qian...” Yang Jian suddenly announced a terrifying conclusion.

“You’re lying; these two people look nothing alike.” Xiong Wenwen sneaked another glance. Although this older sister was also quite pretty, she was definitely not the same as Tong Qian.

Yang Jian said, “It’s just the faces that are different. Their figures are similar. Don’t forget the ghost we encountered before – it could strip people’s faces. Since it can remove someone’s face, swapping it with another is also possible.”

Xiong Wenwen was momentarily stunned, because, after hearing him say that, it did seem possible.

“But whether it is or isn’t will be known after a try,” Yang Jian cautiously walked forward, but a headless shadow at his feet eerily stood up first and swiftly ran behind the female receptionist.

The Ghost Shadow’s approach didn’t elicit any reaction from the female receptionist, who still wore a slight smile, her expression somewhat rigid.

Yet, no reaction didn’t mean Yang Jian was reassured.

Soon, the Ghost Shadow’s stature gradually shrank to match the height and figure of the female receptionist and then took a step forward, quickly merging into her body.

The female receptionist’s body shuddered slightly; she became as still as a puppet, not moving an inch.

At that moment, her body was taken over by the Ghost Shadow.

Yang Jian took a look and then confidently walked over.