

Revival 381

Chapter 381: Person in Charge Shen Liang

Shen Liang.

A man in his early thirties, young-looking yet brimming with energy, his slightly mature face bore a kind and pleasant smile that gave off a very friendly and amiable vibe, completely devoid of the imposing aura one might expect from someone in a high position wielding great power. If Yang Jian hadn't known his identity, he might have mistaken him for a regular neighborhood uncle.

Though the first impression was quite favorable, Yang Jian didn't think that made the man easy to deal with.

Being at the same level as Zhao Jianguo meant he was surely no simple character; the headquarters wouldn't assign such a person to manage such important matters without good reason.

"Hello Yang Jian, I'm Shen Liang. I've often heard Zhao Jianguo mention you. This is our first meeting. I hope you'll take good care of me in the future," Shen Liang said enthusiastically as he entered the office, extending both hands as if he were addressing a superior, despite Yang Jian being much younger.

He showed not the slightest bit of pride or temper.

Yang Jian felt the warmth from his hands and responded calmly, "Team Leader Shen is joking. I'm just a worker here; how could I possibly take care of you? Everything is just a matter of official business.

However, I am curious, wasn't Zhao Jianguo in charge of this? There was no prior communication about suddenly switching people."

"According to the rules of the headquarters, the person in charge shouldn't be changed at random, unless... he's dead."

Shen Liang shook his head with a smile, "Actually, we were supposed to notify you in advance, but unfortunately, some issues arose at headquarters. Zhao Jianguo was disciplined due to some work-related mishaps, so for the foreseeable future, he probably won't be able to continue working. I will be in charge of your team's work from now on."

"Seems like it's not all quiet within the headquarters either. I hope they haven't replaced my operator as well."

Yang Jian's eyes flickered, looking at him with a hint of profound meaning.

"You can rest assured about that; absolutely not. I can guarantee you, this really is just about some of Zhao Jianguo's work mistakes, nothing else," Shen Liang reassured very earnestly: "Liu Xiaoyu is resting in the lounge right now. If you don't believe me, I can get her on the line at any time."

"I hope it's just some work-related mistakes," said Yang Jian slowly before letting go of his hand.

Shen Liang then turned to Feng Quan with a smile, "Nice to meet you. This must be the famous Feng Quan from the headquarters. Hello, I'll have to learn a lot from you regarding work matters in the future."

Feng Quan indeed counted as a veteran among the ghost-controlling experts.

He was Dachang City's first person in charge, and his survival up to this point was noteworthy indeed.

"Hello, Team Leader Shen," Feng Quan nodded, acknowledging their acquaintance.

"I had heard about the severity and harm of the Z City incident. We owe it to Tong Qian for timely stopping the spread of that event. Although I'd heard some unfavorable news about you before, it turns out that good people are blessed. Seeing you safe and sound makes me happier than anything else," Shen Liang greeted Tong Qian warmly.

However, the smile on his face triggered the supernatural entity within Tong Qian.

Tong Qian's head tilted slightly, and the laughing face moved to the center, looking at him with an eerie expression.

Confronted with this sudden occurrence, Shen Liang trembled slightly, a flash of panic and unease crossing his eyes.

"You shouldn't smile at me; it's not a good thing. I'm afraid I won't be able to control myself and end up accidentally killing you, Team Leader Shen. You can leave the matters here to Yang Jian and Feng Quan. I'm not in good shape, unable to work normally like before, sorry," the ghostly face on Tong Qian spoke, its voice chilling, evoking an eerie sensation.

"I understand, it's okay as long as you're alright," Team Leader Shen's smile was instinctive, but as soon as he realized what Tong Qian said, he quickly suppressed the smile, his expression turning exceptionally awkward.

Tong Qian continued, "All the information regarding the Z City incident is here, and the ghost we detained is also here. Team Leader Shen, you can take over today."

She pointed to a pitch-black body bag in the corner.

The silhouette of a body could be faintly discerned within.

"Rest assured, I'll handle this matter well. You've all worked hard; now take a good rest," Shen Liang said, nodding before walking over and picking up the body bag.

The corpse wasn't heavy or restless, but holding it in his hands gave an inexplicably unsettling feeling.

If this office hadn't been filled with some of the country's leading ghost-controlling experts, he wouldn't have dared to make direct contact so rashly.

As Shen Liang was about to hand over the body bag to his colleagues, one of Yang Jian's hands suddenly grabbed his arm.

The cool palm conveyed an astonishing force, as if clutched by the stiff fingers of someone on the brink of death.

“Since Captain Shen will be in charge from now on, shouldn’t some of the things promised by Zhao Jianguo also be your responsibility? It wouldn’t be right for a new person to take over and the previous leader’s promises to no longer hold,” Yang Jian said.

Others might not worry about Shen Liang’s arrival in Z City, but they had some concerns about this Yang Jian.

A thorny issue, he was someone with strong abilities, yet extremely difficult to deal with.

“I’m not sure what Zhao Jianguo promised before. Since I’m taking over, if it’s something I can fulfill, I will definitely do so. Please rest assured,” Shen Liang said earnestly.

Yang Jian said, “It’s nothing particularly important. Previously, Wang Xiaoming wrote me an IOU. He owes me a Ghost Candle. Aren’t you planning on helping me to press this issue, Captain Shen? And the reason this incident was resolved is that I used up two Ghost Candles and called in reinforcements by offering the position to control two ghosts. Personal risk and effort are one thing, as it was all in consideration of Z City’s safety, but a person shouldn’t be expected to operate at a loss, right? In ancient times, soldiers had a stipend. Don’t you think you should reimburse me, Captain Shen?”

Hearing this, Shen Liang’s mouth twitched instantly.

Resources like Ghost Candles and the position to control ghosts were beyond his purview to reimburse.

“Captain Shen, you’re a straightforward person. Don’t make empty promises to deceive me, or this will be our last meeting,” Yang Jian warned.

Yang Jian released his arm, the flesh on his forehead split open, revealing a crimson and eerie eyeball that swiveled restlessly.

Shen Liang turned with some difficulty and said, “Mister Yang, this is beyond my responsibility, the resources for Ghost Candles have always been managed by Professor Wang. I can’t even seize them if I tried. Why don’t you give Professor Wang a call and discuss this matter?”

“I’m not on good terms with him. I killed his brother in front of him in Dachang City last time. And during the Hungry Ghost incident, we had some minor frictions that didn’t end pleasantly, so I won’t contact him. Besides, aren’t you and headquarters on the same side? You ask me to reach out, why don’t you take care of the supernatural event yourself?” Yang Jian argued.

Yang Jian calmly said, “Passing the buck is pointless, Captain Shen. And stop calling me Mister Yang. I’m just a common worker. You provide the resources, and I do the work for you; it’s that simple.”

“How about this, I’ll advance you one year’s worth of cooperation in gold, and then I’ll submit a report about your situation. As long as the minister approves, I guarantee all your expenses for this operation will be reimbursed,” Shen Liang proposed.

“That’ll do for now. I’m planning to apply for a long vacation with Tong Qian and Feng Quan soon. We can talk about what comes after once the reimbursement comes through,” Yang Jian responded.

Shen Liang immediately said, "Please, don't. There's room for negotiation, isn't there? I haven't said I won't take care of it; it's just that I really can't make decisions on this matter."

He didn't dare to let Tong Qian, Feng Quan, and Yang Jian take a holiday all at once. If they returned to headquarters, his fate wouldn't be much better than Zhao Jianguo's.

"The fact that we're still sitting here in the office talking means we're negotiating well. If you can't handle it, let Zhao Jianguo come," Yang Jian stated.

He didn't mean to make things difficult for anyone, but he had lost too much in this operation. If headquarters didn't reimburse him for something as a gesture of goodwill, he would not accept it.

Caught in a dilemma, Shen Liang then said, "Wait here for a moment, I'll make a call to ask for instructions from above to see how to handle this situation."

"Feel free," said Yang Jian.

Shen Liang had to put down the body bag he was holding and hurried outside to make the call.

"Isn't this a bit too much?"

Tong Qian frowned at his side, "After all, it's all in the interest of the bigger picture. There's no need to haggle over every detail. It's good enough that we're still alive."

Yang Jian replied, "It's true, but just because we survived this time, does that guarantee survival next time? I didn't cut any corners in dealing with the supernatural events. Asking for something isn't too much, besides it's not even a demand, it's reimbursement. Don't be too rigid. Some resources are wasted at headquarters. In our hands, they can be used to their greatest potential."

"Brother Tui makes a good point," Feng Quan considered and found this reasonable.

Hearing this, Tong Qian didn't say any more. Although she thought Yang Jian's approach was somewhat mercenary and petty, she also believed it was not wrong.

After stepping out, Shen Liang didn't actually make the call to headquarters.

Doing so would not only reveal his inability but might also lead to the dismissed Zhao Jianguo's potential return.

"This Yang Jian is young, but he's no simpleton. No wonder Zhao Jianguo often had headaches over this man. This guy won't take action until he sees a sure gain," Shen Liang lit a cigarette and furrowed his brow.

“Captain, why not just take direct control of the Z City incident? The problem has already been resolved, and it’s highly unlikely that Yang Jian would turn hostile and strike at us. He doesn’t have the guts,” a colleague suggested in a hushed tone.

Shen Liang glanced at him, “What if he turns aggressive? Can you beat them?”

“Although Yang Jian has handled S-level supernatural events and has a big reputation, I’m not afraid of him. After all, he took advantage of the situation last time. Without that Coffin Nail, he would have been done for,” the man replied.

“It would be possible to suppress Yang Jian alone, but what about Feng Quan and Tong Qian? When three ghost controllers gather, if not handled properly, it could lead to serious problems. Many things have changed now. A single ghost controller can influence the stability of an entire region. A few top-tier controllers together can even sway global events.”

“Additionally, Yang Jian holds some terrifying secrets. He can even resurrect the dead, which is of great value to us.”

After contemplating, Shen Liang gritted his teeth, “Give him what he wants; otherwise, today’s issue won’t be resolved,”

Chapter 382: A Special Rag Doll

Yang Jian originally intended to extort Zhao Jianguo, but unexpectedly, the person in charge changed to someone named Shen Liang at the last minute.

It doesn't matter, extorting anyone is the same.

If today he didn't receive a reimbursement for the losses incurred during this operation, he wouldn't relent easily; after all, this supernatural incident had been too perilous, having mysteriously suffered a slash from a ghost, he completely ruined a whole Ghost Candle. Despite having faced life-threatening dangers two or three times and gaining two teammates, Feng Quan and Tong Qian, some matters needed clear accounting.

Just think, if Yang Jian hadn't insisted on taking a Ghost Candle with him last time, he would have died in the Z city incident.

So one cannot be so noble; one must be selfish when it's time to be selfish.

About ten minutes passed.

Shen Liang returned with a serious expression. This time he didn't have a warmly enthusiastic smile. Whether he was bleeding internally from being extorted by Yang Jian or he was afraid that Tong Qian's face was staring at him again, was unknown.

"What's the result?" Yang Jian asked.

He wasn't so idle as to eavesdrop on Shen Liang's conversation, so he didn't know what had been discussed in those ten minutes.

It didn't matter; he only cared about the result, not the process.

Shen Liang sat down, sighed, and said, "It's definitely impossible to reimburse the two Ghost Candles right away. Such Strategic Level resources require strict application. You know, Yang Jian, last time after you solved an S-level supernatural incident, the higher-ups rewarded you with a Ghost Candle, so there's really nothing I can do."

"So there's nothing to talk about." Yang Jian said.

Shen Liang said, "However, although there are no Ghost Candles, I can use something else as a substitution to reimburse you for the losses of this operation."

Having said that, he gestured with his hand to the accompanying personnel.

A specially made briefcase was brought over and placed on the desk.

"What kind of thing is worth as much as two Ghost Candles?" Yang Jian didn't look at the briefcase, but instead fixated on Shen Liang: "Let alone the white Ghost Candles—those Wang Xiaoming probably has plenty of—the key is the red Ghost Candle that can resist the attacks of malicious spirits. Without it, no one can guarantee they won't die in a supernatural incident next time."

"This thing in some ways is even more special than a Ghost Candle, it's very difficult to obtain, but in terms of value, it far exceeds the two Ghost Candles you want to be reimbursed for," Shen Liang said solemnly. "If it were anyone else, I would not possibly offer it, but because you contributed to the Z city incident, and you saved Feng Quan and Tong Qian, greatly reducing the casualties for the headquarters, that's why I've made an exception."

"I knew the headquarters had some special things. You've been researching malicious spirits for so long, and with top minds like Wang Xiaoming working there, how could there be no outcomes?"

Yang Jian chuckled lightly, "Hiding and holding back, in plain words, is just not trusting us Necromancers."

"What's in the box, take it out and let's have a look."

Shen Liang said, "I can take the item out, but I have a condition."

"A condition?"

Yang Jian tilted his head and looked at him, "You're talking about conditions before even giving me anything, as if I'm begging you. If that's the case, next time a supernatural incident occurs somewhere, don't call me for support."

"No, it's not a condition; it's just a small request. I hope Tong Qian can accompany me to J city after this incident ends," Shen Liang said.

"Why are you asking me about transferring Tong Qian to J city? Wait a minute, the higher-ups are very concerned about Tong Qian's resurrection, aren't they? I remember I have to go to J city next month as well. Are you trying to use this opportunity to clarify what happened?" Yang Jian said, his gaze sharpening as he spoke gravely.

Sharp fellow.

Shen Liang inwardly marveled, despite Yang Jian's young age, his intuition and reaction were extremely quick. No wonder he hadn't died in so many supernatural incidents.

There was a reason he had survived so far.

"It's an order from above, and I hope you won't take it the wrong way. After all, if there's anything from Tong Qian's resurrection that can be used as a reference, it could reduce a lot of unnecessary casualties in the future. This would be a fortunate thing for the entire country. Of course, you don't have to worry, the headquarters won't shortchange you," Shen Liang explained frankly.

Now that the issue was laid bare, Shen Liang spoke straightforwardly.

Yang Jian said, "Tong Qian's resurrection is not reproducible. Do you think ghosts are that easy to control? These taboos should not be touched, because the consequences are unimaginable. Tong Qian will not go to J city with you. She will only be responsible for Z city, now and in the future..."

But before he could finish, Tong Qian, who was at his side, interjected: "Yang Jian, I know what you mean, but if my resurrection could be replicated, it would be a good thing for everyone. Captain Shen, rest assured, I will go to J city. Just give the order, and I'll act immediately."

Captain Shen was overjoyed at her words, having thought that Tong Qian looked up to Yang Jian as her leader; he hadn't anticipated this turn of events.

Yang Jian's face darkened as Tong Qian's overflowing compassion seemed to suggest that the modifications he had given her were still not thorough enough. Didn't she know that the only reason she could be revived was because she had never truly died?

Moreover, speaking of true resurrection, so far, only Zhang Wei had experienced it.

But the price of Zhang Wei's resurrection was too steep; reviving just once required releasing a ghost from within the Ghost Mirror. If this was abused, the consequences would be unimaginably horrific.

"Whatever, as long as you're happy," Yang Jian waved his hand indifferently and calmly said.

After all, the secret of resurrection was in his own hands, and studying Tong Qian would only be a waste of time. The reason he didn't want Tong Qian to get involved was that he feared it would bring him unnecessary trouble.

"Then it's settled. Please, take this," Shen Liang said at this moment as he opened the briefcase and turned it towards Yang Jian.

Yang Jian saw what was inside the briefcase and immediately furrowed his brows.

Inside the briefcase was a palm-sized cloth doll made from dirty, old fabric. Whatever was stuffed inside emitted a rotting stench, and on the doll's limbs, belly, and head were embedded pencils' thickness golden needles.

Six Golden Needles firmly pinned it inside the briefcase.

"A creepy thing," Yang Jian's gaze shifted slightly, instinctively sensing an eerie aura emanating from the doll.

This aura was exactly the same as when facing a ghost.

After observing for a while, he raised his head and asked, "What's the use of this cloth doll?"

Shen Liang didn't speak but simply pulled out the Golden Needle from the doll's head.

Immediately.

The cloth doll's head began to move, twisting left and right, like a trapped little person trying to break free.

Shen Liang quickly nailed the Golden Needle back into place, and the cloth doll stopped moving again.

"It moves. If it's not pinned down, it'll run away, but it's not very harmful. At most, it can run for a few days, and once the fabric wears off and the contents leak out, this cloth doll will die. It is a specific type of consumable," said Shen Liang.

"As for its function, it's simple; it can die once for you."

"This thing can die in place of a person? What kind of joke is that, Captain Shen? You wouldn't be deceiving us, right?" Feng Quan, who was beside him, was incredibly astonished; he couldn't believe such a wonderful thing existed.

Shen Liang said, "How could I deceive anyone with this matter? You only need to drop a drop of your blood onto this cloth doll and then remove the Golden Needles, letting the doll run away. Any ghost that attacks you will instead attack this cloth doll. And most importantly, as long as the cloth doll hasn't been killed by a ghost, you will be in absolute safety."

"A scapegoat doll?" Yang Jian's gaze became sharp. "Have you tested it?"

"Of course, I wouldn't dare bring it out without testing," Shen Liang confidently stated.

Yang Jian observed the crooked black stitches on the cloth doll, and after careful examination, he could ascertain that it wasn't sewn with cotton thread but instead with hair, a woman's hair, because only a woman's hair could be so long.

However, the doll's stitching was dreadfully poor; it could only be said to be barely assembled, and anyone else's handiwork could never be so inferior.

"This item couldn't have been made by a human," he said solemnly as he raised his head. "Whether by hand or machine, it would be impossible to create a doll like this. The technique is very similar to that of ghosts."

Like the handwriting ghosts leave on newspapers, distorted and jumbled, with no semblance of actual handwriting.

"I'm sorry," Shen Liang said. "Everything about this object is confidential; I can't tell you any more."

"I'm not allowed to know even with my current level?" asked Yang Jian.

Shen Liang shook his head, "Honestly, even I do not know. All I know is that it is highly confidential. Perhaps Professor Wang knows."

Yang Jian did not ask any further. He pondered for a moment and then said, "If this thing is really as you say, then let's consider the losses of this operation compensated. However, Wang Xiaoming still owes me a Ghost Candle, and you'll have to follow up on that."

He was a bit wary of this cloth doll.

There was a great likelihood that it was an object created by ghosts, possessing an inexplicable eeriness and malevolence.

However, Shen Liang's words were so firm, he must know the doll was genuinely useful to dare present it, yet the information concerning this cloth doll seemed highly classified.

Chapter 383 The Appearance of Guo Fan

The handover of the incident in Z City was completed.

The next day, Yang Jian left the city and returned to Dachang City, after all, it was his responsibility to deal with some matters there.

"Team Shen, Yang Jian has confirmed his return to Dachang City, seems like he won't stir up any more trouble," said a ghost hunter colleague in a low voice.

"But was it a bit too wasteful to appease him by giving away that cloth doll? That thing isn't even available at headquarters, and it was only brought along this time just in case," another ghost hunter remarked quietly.

At this moment, Shen Liang stood on the rooftop of a high-rise building, his gaze fixed on the sealed-off Caesar Hotel in the distance, his brow slightly furrowed. "After all, he's Zhao Jianguo's top ghost hunter, we have to give him some respect. Falling out with him would do no good for anyone. Moreover, Feng Quan and Tong Qian seem to trust him quite a bit, with everything revolving around him, that's no small influence," he said.

"Besides, Yang Jian will be my responsibility from now on. We'll have dealings with him again; consider it leaving a good impression. Since he's returned to Dachang City, there's no need to say more. Now we

need to figure out how to get Guo Fan out. After all, Guo Fan is one of our own; we can't let him go down here," Shen Liang continued.

He glanced at the location on his mobile phone.

A special signal was still flashing from a certain room on the fourth floor of the Caesar Hotel nearby.

"With his abilities, he shouldn't be dead. He sent out a distress signal earlier, but Yang Jian ignored it, refusing rescue," said the ghost hunter beside him.

Shen Liang said, "Refusing to rescue was the right call. In light of Tong Qian, Guo Fan, and Feng Quan being consecutively taken down inside the hotel, even a fool would know the extreme danger inside. Anyone going in for a rescue should weigh their own capabilities; otherwise, it would be a death mission. Yang Jian's survival through several supernatural events until now is certainly due to having the most basic judgment skills."

"That's true," the colleague nodded, then added in a low voice, "However, according to Tong Qian's report, there's an unknown ghost inside the hotel. After rescuing Feng Quan and Tong Qian, Yang Jian chose to seal off the hotel. Look at those doors and windows, all collapsed, and the main entrance is sealed shut. It's due to using the Ghost Domain to damage the building's structure."

"It shows that Yang Jian didn't have a handle on that thing, so he chose to seal off the entire building, thereby restricting the ghost's movement. Should we consider this when rescuing Guo Fan?"

Shen Liang waved his hand and said, "I don't plan to deal with the unknown ghost inside. I won't disrupt the arrangements Yang Jian made before he left, but breaching just a part of the hotel to rescue our man should mean we won't be so unlucky as to encounter that thing."

While he was speaking, a staff member came to report, "The explosives are ready, we can begin the rescue operation at any time."

"Excellent, in one minute we start the controlled detonation, blow open that wall there. Once the explosion succeeds, immediately have the fire brigade set up ladders..."

Shen Liang immediately arranged the rescue operation, then paused and turned to say, "Zong Shan, you run this one. Just bring the person out, and if you encounter danger, retreat immediately."

The ghost hunter named Zong Shan nodded, then quickly turned and descended the building.

One minute passed quickly.

Following the countdown of ten, nine, eight, seven... the command for detonation was given.

"Boom!"

A loud blast sounded as a wall on the ground floor of the Caesar Hotel was directly blown open, smoke billowing all around.

When the smoke cleared enough, a ladder truck was positioned directly at the blasted opening on the fourth floor.

The young man named Zong Shan, without any protection, climbed the ladder through the dust and ascended to the fourth floor of the hotel.

It must be said, Shen Liang's methods were indeed very savvy; knowing there was a problem with the hotel, he had no intention of sending anyone in deep. Instead, he opted for this ordinary approach of conducting the rescue from outside the hotel, thus avoiding as much as possible any contact with the supernatural within.

Indeed, due to Shen Liang's approach, the ghost hunter named Zong Shan was very lucky to have survived.

Because he didn't leave his footprint within the range of the ghost's activity. Otherwise, if a ghost inside stepped on his footprint, he wouldn't even know how he died.

The demolition experts were highly skilled.

The blasting damaged the hotel wall but didn't cause too much harm inside.

When Zong Shan climbed to a suite inside the hotel, he immediately took out his satellite positioning mobile phone.

The signal was correct; it was this room.

Zong Shan looked at the door with wary eyes.

Behind the door was the haunted hotel. He dared not venture deeper, and for safety, he went over to lock the door from the outside, ensuring that if there were any problems, the bolted door would give him time to react.

Then, following the signal source, he headed to a bedroom inside to investigate the situation.

Handled matters with great caution and steadiness.

The dim bedroom had an inexplicable chill to it, as though an old house, long uninhabited, had been reopened today.

Zong Shan didn't speak up or rush inside; he simply took the flashlight and shone it around to assess the situation in the bedroom.

He saw the source of the signal.

A mobile phone stood on the nightstand, its online status maintained.

Next to the phone, strikingly out of place, was a wooden spirit tablet, resembling the kind used for someone who has passed away, but it was mottled and exceptionally aged.

Embedded within the spirit tablet was a black-and-white photograph.

The photograph was of a deceased man.

This man was... Guo Fan.

Additionally, in front of this portrait knelt a man, motionless, his body rigid as if he had been dead for several days, devoid of any signs of life.

"Guo Fan, what's the situation here?"

Seeing this eerie scene, Zong Shan did not tense up but instead let out a slight sigh of relief.

At that moment, a voice suddenly rang out in the dim room: "I thought you wouldn't come. Do you even need to ask? I fell for it and had to resort to the old methods to avoid the ghost's attack."

"Can we leave now?" asked Zong Shan.

The voice of Guo Fan continued to resonate in the room, and upon closer inspection, it was discovered that the voice was actually coming from the somber black-and-white photograph on the spirit tablet, while his body remained rigidly prostrate, unmoving on the floor.

"It's hard to say, the situation here is a bit complicated. I've felt myself targeted by a malevolent ghost at least four times while I've been trapped here. The most recent time was a day ago, and if I weren't already dead, I would likely have been killed by the ghost on any of those occasions... What about Feng Quan? He should have been attacked too, right? Did he not die?"

"He survived, he's fine. The report said he was saved by Yang Jian from this place," Zong Shan replied.

"Yang Jian saved him? That's impossible," said Guo Fan with a hint of astonishment in his tone: "Yang Jian wouldn't possibly save Feng Quan; they had friction when they were in Dachang City."

"Who knows what he was thinking; let's focus on solving the problem at hand. You can't stay here like this indefinitely; sooner or later, you will die. You must leave now."

Zong Shan's expression shifted slightly as he looked toward Guo Fan's immobile body.

If he continued to stay in this state, he wouldn't last much longer.

Guo Fan hesitated, unsure whether leaving this state would expose him again to the ghost's attacks.

The ghosts in this hotel were terrifying, and most ghost tamers struggled to withstand them.

But to remain deadlocked was to embrace certain death.

Finally, Guo Fan made up his mind.

Then, his rigid body oddly stood up, stepping forward a few paces, and picked up the spirit tablet in front of him.

The black-and-white photograph of him on the spirit tablet gradually became blurry until it turned blank, leaving only a gradually sharpening outline of a figure that shouldn't belong to him, one that came with the tablet.

"Wait."

Suddenly, Zong Shan's expression hardened, and he hastily retreated several steps, pressing himself against the wall beside him as he listened for noises outside the door.

The sound of footsteps arose from the hallway, immensely heavy.

"Footsteps are approaching this way."

"There can't possibly be living people in the hotel at this time," Guo Fan said expressionlessly as he walked out, the spirit tablet he had been holding nowhere to be seen.

Chapter 384 Personal Archives

The hotel couldn't possibly still have any living people; everyone knew that in their hearts.

Yet the clear sound of footsteps coming from just beyond the wall made one's heart sink involuntarily. Despite it still being broad daylight outside, with the sunlight even able to shine in, everything around bright and clear, this offered him not the slightest comfort.

Once that thing appeared, it killed without any sense of reason.

It was terrifying and strange, unpredictable.

"The footsteps are very close; it seems like they're heading this way."

Zong Shan listened against the wall again, confirming it with certainty.

The footsteps were heavy, devoid of any echo, carrying a deathly aura as they moved along the floor. In his mind, he could even picture a corpse wandering aimlessly in the dim corridor next door.

"Yang Jian's intel is accurate; there is indeed something terrifying wandering around in here. No wonder he suggested sealing off the entire hotel."

He looked up again, "Guo Fan, what do you plan to do?"

"I've already stood up; I can't just go back to the altar now, can I?"

Guo Fan's face looked a bit awful, "Don't worry about that thing. I've heard those footsteps more than once during the days I was trapped here. They appear periodically, so, to leave here... Although I don't understand the pattern of that thing, since Yang Jian dared to seal this place with confidence, it means its range of influence isn't great."

"Let's hope nothing happens." Zong Shan was tense all over because at this moment he was certain that the footsteps were just beyond this wall.

Which meant that the ghost was only a wall away from him.

Not daring to get close to such a supernatural presence, he immediately moved away from the wall, retreating several steps backward.

Guo Fan also quickly chose to retreat.

The two of them quickly left the fourth floor via the fire ladder they had used earlier and arrived outside the hotel.

During the retreat, both of them were constantly looking into the broken rooms, especially towards the firmly locked room door.

They were terrified that the door would burst open with a bang and something horrifying would appear before them.

The situation seemed better than expected.

The locked room door didn't open, and they successfully distanced themselves from the dangerous area. The ghost inside didn't seem to have followed them out, either.

"A close call, huh?" Shen Liang, the team leader observing from a distance with binoculars, also let out a sigh of relief.

From his observations of Zong Shan's movements, it was clear they encountered something terrifying within the hotel and the danger was very close to them. Fortunately, the supernatural presence inside never erupted, and the rescue mission ended successfully, with Guo Fan and Zong Shan both coming back alive.

"Zhang Gao, could you have a construction team close up the blasted opening afterwards, and seal off any possible entrances to the hotel, including windows and even sewer drains. Set up a warning

perimeter around it—not just 500 meters, but 1,000 meters. From now on, this place is sealed off, and arrange for personnel to stand guard. We cannot allow anyone near it."

Now that the situation was resolved, Shen Liang began to organize the follow-up work.

The liaison from Dachang City, Zhang Gao, nodded and then said, "But this might have a significant impact. Can't we solve it once and for all?"

"Three exorcists fell victim in one go here, even with Yang Jian leading the team it wasn't resolved, so there's definitely a serious problem. A temporary seal is the best course of action for now. Rest assured, headquarters won't ignore this; when conditions permit, it will be dealt with," Shen Liang said patiently.

"That's the only way then." Zhang Gao frowned slightly, looking a bit worried.

Three days later, as Shen Liang led Guo Fan, Tong Qian, and others to J City, the Dachang City's head balloon incident came to a temporary close.

Although the problem wasn't completely resolved, at least its impact was contained.

Although it seemed that Yang Jian hadn't done much this time, he did come away with some gains. Though he had to give up Ghost Candle and the face-covering cloth, he gained two teammates, resurrected Tong Qian, and discovered the hotel ghost's habits and some special secrets.

"The existence of that ghost will be of use someday; for now, getting in touch is still too risky."

With this thought, he returned to Dachang City once more.

When he stood at the entrance of the Guanjiang Residential Complex with his suitcase, he found that there had been quite a few changes since he last left.

There were security guards at the entrance, each one exuding a fierce demeanor, clearly professionally trained.

The security monitoring had also become much more stringent, and he even saw teams of security personnel patrolling within the complex, which had not been the case before.

"Zhang Wei's dad is pretty impressive in getting things done. He built a safe house earlier, stockpiled supplies, and then reorganized the security of the neighborhood... It was indeed no mistake to work with him," Yang Jian thought to himself.

After all, he was just a student, and if he were to handle these matters, he wouldn't have managed any of them well. Of course, he was also very aware of his own capabilities, which is why he had sought to cooperate with Zhang Xiang; he provided the security resources, and the other provided manpower and material support. Under such mutually beneficial circumstances, not a single member of Zhang Wei's family died during the Hungry Ghost incident.

Although Yang Jian valued benefits, he also knew when to be generous, and he wouldn't be stingy when it was time to be open-handed.

He had yielded quite a lot, like the quotas for the safe house and shares in the Guanjiang Residential Complex.

It seemed that Zhang Xiangui had profited, as after all, the Gold used to build the safe house and the resolution of the paranormal events within the complex were all thanks to Yang Jian. However, Yang Jian was clear that, if it were solely up to him, there would never have been such a scenario.

But just this was still not enough.

Yang Jian also wanted to use his security benefits as a core, with Dachang City as a foundation, and himself at the center, to create a larger cooperative group.

Only in this way could he ensure he'd maintain control of Dachang City's territory in the future.

Entering the neighborhood, the guards on duty did not stop him but immediately let him through with great politeness; they recognized Yang Jian.

Others might need to swipe a card to enter or exit the complex, but Yang Jian just needed to show his face.

After all, Yang Jian was the second-largest shareholder of the complex. Nearly half of it belonged to him, so he certainly had the privilege to bypass normal security measures with facial recognition.

He returned home.

There was no one in the house; Jiang Yan wasn't there, nor was Zhang Liqin.

The computer room reserved for Zhang Wei was also empty.

The absence of people appeared to be temporary, as Yang Jian noticed the room was very clean and there were plenty of fruits and snacks on the table, which certainly must have been bought by Jiang Yan.

He didn't pay much attention and went straight to the fifth floor.

He checked each room.

There were fierce ghosts locked up in specially made boxes, the Ghost Mirror covered in black cloth, and a skeleton that had been dismantled and restrained... Finally, he also looked up at the window outside, to a solitary decorative structure, the bell tower.

At the very top of the bell tower, in a small compartment, was a red wooden cabinet placed very conspicuously from this angle.

That was the Ghost Cabinet.

Since Yang Jian was uncertain about the other risks it might pose, he dared not keep it at home and instead placed it in the bell tower not too far away.

Having ascertained that there had been no abnormalities with these supernatural objects during his absence, Yang Jian began to organize the items from this time.

The eerie doll from the suitcase, that bloodstained old newspaper.

As well as the archived documents recording this incident.

"The tall male corpse with a knife in Z City's Caesar Hotel, codenamed: Man-Killing Ghost, my assessment of the danger level: A, movement patterns..."

Yang Jian picked up a voice recorder and started recording some of the critical information from this time, to later input into the computer and categorize it for saving, ensuring that he wouldn't forget in the future.

Previous events like the bus incident, the Crying Tomb Ghost, the Dried Corpse Bride, and all the other supernatural events he had experienced were also recorded.

Yang Jian was creating a personal archive of the supernatural.

Some of the information in these personal supernatural archives wasn't even in possession of headquarters.

While there was a risk of these records being stolen, Yang Jian no longer trusted his own brain completely.

Altered memories, supernatural resurrection, or even other situations could all cause him to lose his own memories, making it especially important to have backup archives.

The computer on the fifth-floor desk was not connected to the internet.

After entering the data, there would be no possibility of cyber intrusion unless someone broke in to steal the information.

Chapter 385 Worth

"Screw that, what's that old fart think he is, actually wanting me to drink with him," she snorted contemptuously. "It's utterly disgusting. Who does he think he is? Does he believe he's something special just because he has some stinky money? Staring at my legs the whole time, does he think he's worthy of touching my silky smooth legs? Even Yang Jian hasn't touched them."

As soon as she entered, Jiang Yan, dressed in business attire, spoke angrily.

She had gone to discuss some company matters today, but unexpectedly ran into a repulsive man.

Zhang Liqin, who also followed into the room, was somewhat surprised, "Aren't you and Yang Jian on bad terms?"

Jiang Yan rolled her eyes, "Of course we're in a good relationship. When we struggled to start the business, we slept in the same bed all the time. But I guess I'm not his type, he's lukewarm towards me. But it's fine, I've stuck to him for life anyway. Right, why aren't you angry today? That old guy kept staring at your chest too."

While speaking, she glanced enviously at Zhang Liqin's impressive bust. This was almost unreasonable, it was as if reality had been distorted, how could they possibly be that large without being drawn in a comic.

Zhang Liqin chuckled lightly, "I've gotten used to it since high school, and I always dress conservatively. Those men can't see through clothing, they can't see anything. Why should I get angry? You've probably never had a boyfriend before, otherwise, you wouldn't be so angry."

"How do you know that?" asked Jiang Yan, somewhat surprised.

"I'm experienced, of course I know," Zhang Liqin said with a smile.

"Wait a minute, something's not right." Suddenly, Jiang Yan frowned, sensing that something was amiss.

Zhang Liqin asked, "What's wrong? Did you think of something again, is there a problem with the contract from earlier, or did you forget something at the company?"

"No, someone has been in our house. Didn't you see the lights on? And the snacks I bought yesterday, there's a bag of chips missing." Jiang Yan said with a serious face, "I guess there might have been a burglar."

"A thief wouldn't just steal one bag of chips," Zhang Liqin said somewhat exasperatedly. "Besides, there's nothing valuable in the house."

"What do you mean no valuables? My cosmetics, bags, lipsticks, dresses... they're worth hundreds of thousands, all painstakingly saved by me," Jiang Yan said, "No, I need to check upstairs."

With that, she hurried up the stairs.

But she had not gone up far when she saw Yang Jian coming down while eating a bag of chips.

"How come you're only returning now? I was thinking of discussing some matters with you. Have you been out having fun again? Aren't you afraid of running into ghosts outside?"

The sight of Yang Jian made Jiang Yan's face light up with joy as she threw herself at him and hugged him tightly, "Yang Jian, you're finally back. Where have you been these past few days? Don't you know I thought of you every day, so much that I couldn't sleep from insomnia."

"Don't talk so coquettishly about something that makes my skin crawl. You're afraid of ghosts at night and can't sleep, aren't you?" Yang Jian said.

His words struck right at Jiang Yan's heart.

But she wasn't about to admit it, feigning nonchalance, "That's not it. I really missed you. Tonight, I want to sleep with you, and nobody can separate us."

Yang Jian glanced at Zhang Liqin, "Has she been triggered by something recently? Did she get timely treatment? She's been taking her medication, right? Do not be stingy with money; as your boss, I will reimburse all expenses."

"She's perfectly healthy. Didn't you run into any dangers on your business trip?" Zhang Liqin's eyes flickered with a mature charm that fixed on him.

"Same as usual, no big problems, just nearly died is all," Yang Jian said nonchalantly.

Nearly died?

He mentioned this life-and-death matter as if it were a trivial thing.

"Don't scare me, you know I get scared easily," Jiang Yan said, a bit frightened.

Yang Jian responded, "Don't you know my situation? It would be normal if I accidentally died one day, right? Let's not talk about this for now. You surely wouldn't be interested in supernatural events; talking about it would just give you nightmares. Has everything been alright around here lately? Haven't you had any work to report to me?"

"Of course there's work; I was angry on your behalf just now," Jiang Yan's mood soured again.

"Let's sit on the sofa and talk," Yang Jian said.

Having just sat down, Jiang Yan took out a document from the drawer of the coffee table, "Take a look at this first."

"I don't understand this stuff. Zhang Liqin, explain it," Yang Jian didn't bother looking at the document, as he had just finished recording some files and didn't feel like reading these materials now.

Zhang Liqin smiled, "This is the transfer agreement for Shangtong Tower; it's Dachang City's reward to you for resolving the supernatural incident before. Jiang Yan and I have been running errands for you these past few days, and we haven't been lazy at all."

"An entire tower, you really can do it. That's a landmark building in Dachang City, and it's only been completed for a few years. I even went there for a car show when I was a saleswoman," she said, her face showing her admiration.

"Just a building, it's nothing special. After all, I've risked my life for Dachang City," Yang Jian remarked, as the value of a single building did not concern him.

After all, he now owned half of the Guanjiang Residential Complex.

Money was essentially no longer an issue for him; the remaining problems were those that money couldn't solve.

"Sign here, and the building is yours. Jiang Yan and I will handle the remaining procedures," Zhang Liqin opened the document to a blank space in the contract and took out a pen from her jacket pocket.

Yang Jian did not take the pen but said with a light laugh, "How long do you think the building will stay in my hands after I sign my name?"

"What do you mean?" Jiang Yan blinked, puzzled.

The prospect of gaining a building without lifting a finger was not tempting to Yang Jian. Wasn't he always one to treasure money as if it were his life?

Yang Jian explained, "People like me don't live long. If I want to ensure a safeguard for the future, I need to put some assets in the hands of those who will live longer. Only this way can my family, my relatives, receive care after I'm gone. Otherwise, once I die, it's uncertain whether these things can be retained and they might even bring trouble."

"So, to whom do you intend to transfer it?" Jiang Yan inquired.

Yang Jian shook his head, "I haven't decided yet. Let's discuss it tomorrow. I've just returned today and I'm a bit tired; I'm going to wash up and go to sleep. By the way, has Zang Hua contacted me recently?"

The liaison officer for Dachang City was Zang Hua. Once there was a supernatural event, he would definitely contact himself.

"No, he hasn't been here for several days. He only came once because of the matter with Shangtong Tower after you left." Jiang Yan shook her head.

"That's for the best. His absence means that Dachang City is safe and sound. If he comes, it usually means trouble." Yang Jian said.

The previous assumption was not wrong; after the Hungry Ghost incident ended, Dachang City became especially safe. There wouldn't be any supernatural events cropping up for a while.

"Right, I'm planning a meeting for tomorrow. Jiang Yan, please notify Zhang Wei, as well as his father Zhang Xiang, Wang Shanshan's family, and Zhang Han. I want to take this opportunity to handle some matters. Also, let's have the meeting at Shangtong Tower." Yang Jian pointed at the document in his hand as he spoke.

"When is the meeting?" Jiang Yan asked.

Yang Jian said, "Nine in the morning."

"Alright, I'll call them tonight." Jiang Yan nodded.

"I'm going to sleep," said Yang Jian after giving instructions. He then turned and went upstairs.

After he left, Jiang Yan immediately got busy again. She had to call each person individually, and for those without a phone, she had to visit their houses to knock on their doors.

She always took Yang Jian's instructions very seriously because she was well aware that this was where her value lay.

"Aren't you coming with me?" Jiang Yan asked before she left the house.

Zhang Liqin shook her head, "I won't go. Such a small matter doesn't need two people. I'm going to take a bath and go to sleep as well. I've been running around all day; I don't want to run anymore."

Once Jiang Yan left, she got up and returned to her own room.

After taking a bath, she didn't go to bed but tiptoed to a room on the fifth floor.

She knocked on the door, "Yang Jian, are you there?"

"What is it?" Yang Jian's voice came from inside.

Wrapped in a bath towel, her cheeks slightly flushed, Zhang Liqin walked in with a flirtatious air about her. Seeing Yang Jian sitting on the bed, taking notes, she expertly crawled under the covers and lay down beside him.

"Aren't you going to sleep?" Seeing that the man beside her had no reaction, Zhang Liqin urged in a soft voice.

Yang Jian glanced at her, "I'll sleep in a bit."

Zhang Liqin said, "I had some things I didn't feel were appropriate to say downstairs. I want to ask you for a favor."

"What is it?" Yang Jian asked without looking up.

"Can you sell me a few apartments? I want my relatives to move into the residential complex." Zhang Liqin suggested.

"How many do you need? I'll have Jiang Yan bring them to you later," Yang Jian considered before responding.

Zhang Liqin huffed, "I have some savings. You just advance me some salary, and I can afford it. What would it mean if you just gave them to me? Do you want to keep me as a mistress? Even if you did, I wouldn't agree."

"I mean no offense; I just think your savings won't cover it," Yang Jian replied; "Hasn't Jiang Yan told you about the property prices here?"

"I didn't ask. But isn't the price advertised on the real estate billboard around 9800?" Zhang Liqin retorted.

Yang Jian smiled, "That was before any trouble occurred. Now, after the supernatural incident, the property value in the Guanjiang Residential Complex has gone up a lot more than that."

"How much now?"

"I'm not putting them on the market at the moment. If you really want to buy, I'll have Zhang Xiang price it at one million." Yang Jian asserted.

"One million per apartment?"

"No, per square meter."

Yang Jian stated, "Some wealthy people heard about my reputation and thought it would be easy to live here under my protection. How could I not make a profit off them, given the chance? Wouldn't I be undervaluing myself otherwise?"

Zhang Liqin, both embarrassed and anxious, said, "You might as well be robbing them. You're selling an apartment for a billion? I certainly can't afford that."

"The apartment price is only a million, but safety isn't cheap. I'm not selling real estate; I'm selling a safety service. Supernatural events won't ever happen in this complex while I'm here. Even if they do, I can protect everyone immediately because my Ghost Domain can cover the entire complex instantly. If necessary, I could even transport everyone to a safe place."

"You're saying I shouldn't charge so much?"

Looking at her half-smiling, Yang Jian said, "There's no shortage of rich people in this world, and I'm profiting off them. As for you, I think you're quite valuable. I've saved you three times, and by my standard rescue fees, you're worth at least several billion now."

"I never realized I was worth so much." Zhang Liqin rolled her eyes, "Then just give me a few apartments. Otherwise, I won't be able to explain it to my family. I certainly don't have the money, but if you need someone, I can offer myself."

"With your value being that high, of course, it's more cost-effective to take the person," Yang Jian said seriously.

Zhang Liqin was quite moved and looked at Yang Jian with even more tenderness in her eyes.

But Yang Jian continued, "How much could the construction costs of an apartment be? My high price allows me to legally deduct it from your salary later, effectively earning me a lifelong employee for free, without losing out."

"You're actually calculating this for me." Zhang Liqin rolled her eyes, momentarily dissipated of her touched feelings.

"Enough about that, let's go to sleep," Yang Jian put down his notebook.

"We should have been sleeping by now," Zhang Liqin reached out and turned off the light.

She was getting more and more used to the life with Yang Jian.